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Roles of Technology and of Reading among Five Self-Directed Adult Learners of Japanese as a Foreign Language

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Roles of Technology and of Reading among Five Self-Directed Adult Learners of Japanese as a Foreign Language

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Little is known about foreign language learners who teach themselves without help from educational institutions. Particularly, less commonly taught languages pose unique challenges to self-learn. For instance, Japanese is especially difficult for English-speaking self-directed learners due to the strict copyright law, which makes it difficult to access learning materials, and orthographical differences between English and Japanese. This dissertation study therefore explores how learners of Japanese as a foreign language approach their learning in self-directed learning settings and how reading and technology in particular play roles in their learning. Additionally, this study examines the applicability of extensive reading materials in these learners' learning situations. With a case-study method, five participants (four women and one man) participated in this study. These participants had various backgrounds, including different proficiency levels and diverse reasons for learning Japanese. Per participant, an initial online survey, two interviews, two observations with the think-aloud protocol, diary entries, and an analysis of learning materials were used for data analysis.

Results indicated that these participants approached their self-directed learning in various ways. Technology played an important role for these learners mainly in order to access information (e.g., looking up meanings of words, cultural information). In

contrast, although these participants mostly admitted the importance of reading in learning Japanese, only one of the participants actively read Japanese for learning. As expected, most participants claimed that the difficulty of kanji (a Japanese writing system using Chinese characters) is the main reason that of Japanese reading is so challenging.

During the reading project time, the participants were highly motivated to read the materials that they received. However, there were a few motivational fluctuations throughout the reading project, and their motivation did not often correspond to the actual amount of reading. Overall, the participants' experiences with the extensive reading materials were positive. Upon completing the reading projects, the participants expressed the potentiality of using these materials for their self-directed learning. Yet, they also addressed several concerns and challenges of the materials themselves, including lack of texts that readers are interested in reading, small furigana (i.e., pronunciation guides for kanji), and vertical reading.

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Chapter 1: Rationale

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the United States, the type of individual who learns the Japanese language has changed significantly over the past few decades. According to survey data collected in 2012 by the Japan Foundation, which promotes Japanese language education across the world, the top three reasons for learning Japanese were an interest in the language itself, a need to communicate in the language, and an interest in Japanese popular culture, such as anime, manga (Japanese comics and graphic novels), or J-pop. These three reasons ranked higher than an interest in history and politics or more practical reasons such as getting a job. Due to the popularity of Japanese culture, the number of potential learners of the Japanese language has grown. It can be assumed that there are more young potential learners who are interested in learning Japanese today than ever before.

Regardless of the age of Japanese learners, however, studying Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) is often challenging for multiple reasons, and it is particularly difficult for English-speaking learners. First, not many institutions, particularly at the K-12 level, offer Japanese courses compared to other commonly taught languages such as Spanish. Finding a tutor or taking a community class can also be difficult, as there are not many Japanese communities around the U.S.

Moreover, once they gain access to such classes or communities, JFL learners need to face another challenging part of the language: the "difficultness" of the Japanese language itself. If they are willing to reach a working-knowledge level, they need to invest a lot of time. According to Language Testing International (n.d.), Japanese is categorized as one of the most difficult foreign languages for English-speaking learners. JFL students with very positive attitudes would take about 80-92 weeks (2,400-2,760

hours) to reach superior fluency in an intensive and/or immersion environment where the student-teacher ratio is 1-4:1, whereas English-speaking Spanish learners would reach the same level around 24 weeks (720 hours). This means that after finishing a college-level Japanese as a foreign language requirement (typically 3-4 semesters), JFL learners may not reach even an intermediate level.

Learning Japanese, hence, is a "life-long endeavour" as Thomson put it (as cited in Lee, 1998, p. 282), more so than learning other languages, especially if one wants to reach advanced-level fluency in Japanese. For those who are very motivated but do not have access to classes or who finish formal schooling but wish to continue their learning, self-directed learning (SDL) becomes a viable option. Once JFL learners decide to engage in SDL, however, they are likely to face new challenges: namely, a lack of resources and isolation from social support.

Today, many L2 learners use technology to learn their target languages. Hence, it can easily be assumed that JFL learners also use some form of technology to access learning resources. One of the benefits of using technology is to gain access to authentic resources. Authentic resources are believed to be beneficial for language learning (Kilickaya, 2004). For instance, Singhal (1997) explained that L2 learners can learn the history, culture, and politics of the target language via the Internet, such as by reading an online daily newspaper. There is also another benefit to online reading: hyperlinks. De Ridder (2002) reported that glosses with highlighted hyperlinks let L2 learners pay more attention to the gloss compared to an invisible hyperlink gloss. Because online texts can easily include hyperlinks, L2 learners may learn more vocabulary. Moreover, as the technologies of the Internet and its surroundings develop more and more, the Internet's potential for L2 learning will expand. Other benefits include multimedia (watching and/or uploading content) (Meranzana, 2014), communication with other learners or native

speakers of the target language via emails (Stockwell & Harrington, 2004) or SNS (Blattner & Fiori, 2009), and mobile language learning (Azar & Nasiri, 2014). In sum, it seems that the Internet alone offers plenty of resources that L2 learners can use to complete their learning.

However, for JFL learners, the resources can be very limited for two reasons. The first reason is strict copyright law enforcement in Japan. This is particularly relevant to the multimedia resources on the Internet as well as DVDs and games. The producers of many Japanese authentic videos limit access from overseas. When JFL learners want to access particular videos, they are declined just because they are accessing them from outside of Japan. Many videos on YouTube also get deleted if somebody finds that they violate the copyright law. Although there is no research that reports how much content is restricted with copyright laws or how many videos are uploaded and deleted every day, it is clear that Japanese Internet content is not very reliably available to L2 learners. Additionally, DVDs and games also have regional lockouts that prevent learners from using them in the United States.

Reading resources may not have as many restrictions under copyright laws. However, reading poses another challenge of the Japanese language compared to more commonly taught languages: orthography. Due to the use of kanji (Japanese Chinese characters) in authentic reading materials, these materials can be very challenging to learners. Authentic Japanese newspapers would use what is called *Joyo kanji*, about 2,100 kanji that are commonly used. If an article uses kanji beyond the *Joyo kanji* list, they provide phonetic guides. By comparison, JFL learners who register for university courses may learn about 100 kanji per year. JFL learners in SDL contexts may not focus on kanji and may not learn them at all. Kanji characters are often considered one of the most challenging aspects of Japanese language learning by both beginning- and

advanced-level JFL learners (Mori & Shimizu, 2007; Banno & Ikeda, 2009). Therefore, reading authentic Japanese reading materials alone can cause anxiety in JFL learners. JFL learners may not even try to access authentic reading materials because they know they will have to deal with unfamiliar kanji. In fact, Kawana (2012) reported that even advanced-level JSL learners are not willing to read authentic Japanese readings, and kanji is identified as one of the reasons for such learners' reluctance.

One remedy for this challenge is graded readers and the reading materials recommended for extensive reading (ER). Although there are not many, some existing Japanese reading materials for ER and GR normally provide phonetic guides to the kanji in their readings. Additionally, past empirical work about ER agrees on several benefits of ER in language learning. For instance, Day (2011) pointed out that ER positively affects overall L2 fluency, reading fluency, listening, writing, vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, motivation, and attitudes towards the L2. Similarly, although there have not been many studies conducted yet on Japanese learning specifically, scholars reported that, through ER, JFL/JSL learners can learn more vocabulary (Leung, 2002; Fukumoto, 2004; Mikami & Harada, 2011) and become more motivated (Leung, 2002; Hitotsugi & Day, 2004; Ninomiya & Kawakami, 2012).

These benefits, particularly the motivational benefit, are important for SDL learners. In Garrison's (1997) model of SDL, motivation is a crucial component of SDL that triggers learners to initiate learning tasks. Moreover, in order to succeed in SDL, learners are expected to be self-regulated and highly autonomous. Autonomous and self-regulated learners, as they independently take responsibility for their learning, feel that they have control over their own learning. Such a feeling is necessary to increase their intrinsic motivation to learn (Dickinson, 1995; Kinzie, 1990). As such, motivation and self-regulation/autonomy are reciprocally influenced. If JFL learners in SDL contexts can

increase motivation through ER, then they can also be successful in SDL. Yet, the context of SDL may not hold the same benefits of ER as in classroom settings. Kumada (2012) reported that classroom ER experience is beneficial, as learners can share their experience with their teachers and other classmates. Because SDL learners do not have classmates or teachers and are unlikely to get other social support, ER itself may work differently in SDL settings. No previous work has investigated how JFL learners can use extensive reading in the context of self-directed learning.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Based on the JFL-learning context described above, the present dissertation study had two distinct purposes. First, this study attempted to investigate how JFL learners, who teach, have taught, or wish to teach themselves, approach their SDL. Particular attention was paid to technology and reading, as these two learning dimensions create a unique environment in a JFL learner's SDL. Another purpose of this study was to examine how these self-directed learners use ER materials in their learning and how they feel about such resources. To investigate these two questions, I adopted the case-study method. Specifically, for each of five participants, interviews, observations using think-aloud protocol, and diary data were collected for analysis.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Although the previous literature about technology in language learning and about ER appears promising, it is still unclear whether or not such promise is applicable to all foreign languages and, in particular, in SDL settings. To find out how technology and reading, and especially ER, are used in SDL, the following research questions are posed:

1. What roles do technology and reading play in JFL learners' self-directed learning?

   a. How do JFL learners approach their self-directed learning in regards to technology and reading?

   b. How do JFL learners demonstrate confidence and/or lack of confidence during self-directed learning in terms of the use of technology and reading?

   c. How do reading and technology support JFL learner's self-directed learning?

2. What happens when JFL learners receive both paper- and web-based extensive reading materials for their self-directed learning?

   a. To what degree and in what ways are these learners motivated to read the materials?

   b. How do these learners approach these readings?

   c. How do these learners feel about using these readings for their self-directed learning?

OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT STUDY

This dissertation consists of six chapters in total. The current chapter (Chapter 1) serves as the introduction of the study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to this dissertation. Specifically, it discusses the literature related to SDL, motivation, self-regulated learning and metacognitive skills, learner autonomy, reading, and technology. In addition, the research questions are posed at the end of the second chapter. Chapter 3

illustrates the design of the present study. It includes the rationale for the research methodology, and descriptions of the participants, instruments, procedures, and data analysis method. Chapter 4 summarizes and reports the collected data. It first reports the results for each participant and then summarizes with overall trends. Chapter 5 focuses on the analysis and discussion of the collected data. It is structured according to the posed research questions. Finally, in Chapter 6, research limitations, pedagogical implications, future research suggestions, and final concluding thoughts are offered.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

There are two important terms used throughout this dissertation: self-directed learning (SDL) and self-directed learner. While there are many different definitions and interpretations of these terms, I define these terms as follows:

Self-Directed Learning

There are several different definitions of SDL as well as a variation in the terminology itself (e.g., self-instruction, self-study, etc.). For example, Dickinson (1987) differentiates self-direction from self-instruction. In his definitions, self-direction refers to a "particular attitude to the learning task, where the learner accepts responsibility for all the decisions concerned with his learning but does not necessarily undertake the implementation of those decisions" (p. 11). On the other hand, self-instruction refers to "situations in which learners are working without the direct control of the teacher" (p. 11). In other literature about SDL, the definition of SDL is not clear and rather complex (for a more detailed discussion of the SDL scholarship, see Chapter 2). In this dissertation, SDL is defined as a set of learning processes that learners engage in when they learn foreign languages on their own, outside of formal education (i.e., taking a

language course at a formal education institution). The extent to which learners engage in SDL depends on individual situations. Some learners may engage in SDL entirely when they learn a language, whereas others may combine this approach with formal education, which is not part of SDL.

Self-Directed Learner

A self-directed learner is defined as a learner who engages in SDL either entirely or in part of his/her learning of a target language. This engagement is entirely voluntary, but the reason for engagement can be either out of one's preference or out of necessity, or a combination of both. Moreover, self-directed learners may or may not have social support from more knowledgeable others, such as native speaker friends, tutors, or language instructors. However, the learning content does not directly relate to the requirements in formal education. Hence, a college student who takes a Japanese course can be a self-directed learner as long as what s/he learns is something beyond his/her course requirements (e.g., learn additional vocabulary on his/her own). With social support, self-directed learners do not necessarily decide what they learn, but ultimately they have a right to decide whether or not they actually use it.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In this chapter, the literature related to the present dissertation study are reviewed in five sections, namely, (1) self-directed learning, (2) motivation, (3) self-regulated learning and metacognitive skills, (4) reading, and (5) technology.

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Definition of Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning (SDL) is considered a part of adult education. Merriam (2001) explained that SDL was originally introduced as a form of adult learning in order to differentiate it from children's learning. Knowles (as cited in Garrison, 1997, p. 19) explained that SDL is a "basic human competence-- the ability to learn on one's own." He continues as follows:

> [SDL is] a "process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes." (Knowles, as cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991, p. 21)

Knowles believed that SDL is a process that individuals go through to teach themselves. During the learning process, they may or may not get help from others. Candy (1991) argued that SDL is so important and powerful that the term SDL itself complements other positive terms in education, such as autonomy and self-awareness.

Moreover, Candy (1991) also explained that SDL is context dependent—in other words, it varies due to individual differences and social contexts. For example, the same individual can be more or less autonomous in different contexts. More specifically, s/he can be more autonomous when s/he teaches piano to him/herself since s/he has wanted to

learn piano for a long time and has experience in learning other musical instruments. In contrast, s/he can be less autonomous when s/he learns cooking perhaps because s/he simply does not have any idea what to do. This notion of context dependence is also supported by some other scholars including Garrison (1997) and Song and Hill (2007). Garrison (1997) argued that SDL is developed based on a collaborative constructivist approach, in which individuals make meanings both personally and socially.

Additionally, Garrison (1997) proposed a framework for SDL. He argued that SDL consists of three dimensions: self-management, self-monitoring, and motivation. Each component of this framework is interrelated. Self-management is about self-control, which concerns the management of learning resources and support. This dimension is affected by both social and personal contexts. Self-monitoring is related to cognitive and metacognitive processes. Garrison explained that this dimension is synonymous with the learner's responsibility for learning. Motivation plays a role as a component that mediates the self-management and self-monitoring dimensions during the learning process. There are two types of motivation: *entering motivation* that influences learner's commitment and intent to act and *task motivation* that influences task-level activities and goals. Further, entering motivation is influenced by valence and expectancy. Valence is determined by learner's needs, values, and preferences. Expectancy refers to beliefs about how likely the desired outcome will be achieved. These beliefs are influenced by personal and contextual characteristics. Garrison argued that the self-monitoring and motivational dimensions of SDL have received little attention from scholars.

Song and Hill (2007) used the previously proposed models of SDL, including Candy's (1991) and Garrison's (1997), to propose a new model that fits in the online learning context. Song and Hill explained the unique characteristics of the online learning environment. Since SDL in online contexts likely involves an isolation of learners from

social support, online SDL requires a higher level of SDL. Moreover, they argued that this unique environment influences learners' perception of SDL. Further, learners in online SDL contexts likely face procrastination, which requires high motivation to overcome. To add to this model, Hartley and Bendixen (2001) discussed the importance of two attributes: self-regulation (i.e., metacognitive skills) and epistemological beliefs (i.e., beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowing) for online SDT. Although they are not necessarily the same, JFL learners in SDL contexts may share some characteristics with learners in online SDL, at least in terms of isolation of learners from social support.

Self-Directed Learning in Foreign Language Education

In the field of foreign language education, there is not enough research on SDL, despite the fact that mastering a foreign language likely requires long-term commitment, which school courses alone may not cover. In the late 1980s, scholars started paying attention to SDL due to the influence of mainstream educational research (Gremmo & Riley, 1995). Holec (1988) summarized research reports about the rising trend of self-access centers across European countries. He explained that self-access centers adopted the autonomous learning approach; however, he also noted that "the autonomous learner is not automatically obliged to self-direct his learning either totally or even partially. The learner will make use of his ability to do this only if he so wishes and if he is permitted to do so by the material, social and psychological constraints to which he is subjected" (p.8). By summarizing the research reports in the journal, Holec concluded that flexibility is important regardless of the contexts of SDL.

Dickinson (1987) claimed that SDL is about learner responsibility. He differentiated SDL from classroom learning in that SDL involves attitudes toward

particular tasks in which learners take responsibility for all of their decisions. He also explained that there are different levels of SDL: some learners engage in SDL partially while they take language courses at school, while others decide to teach themselves entirely. There are different reasons for participating in SDL, such as practical reasons, individual differences, and motivation. Dickinson argued that intrinsic motivation, which he defined as the continuous willingness to give high priority to the target language, is affected by self-instruction. He further claimed that intrinsic motivation is positively affected by learners' involvement in decision making as well as a certain degree of freedom in their learning. Additionally, he argued that SDL is helpful for the improvement of metacognitive knowledge (i.e., learning how to learn).

Most research starting in the early 1990s to date, however, was limited to the context of self-access center and SDL programs affiliated with institutions. For example, Victori and Lockhart's (1995) research focused on the importance of metacognition in SDL. They reported two cases of learners who used a self-access center in terms of how learner training/counseling worked and how they developed metacognitive skills. The authors concluded that self-directed language learners would be successful if they could develop metacognitive skills since these skills can lead to increased learner autonomy. For that to occur, extensive counseling and self-access activities are important. Mozzon-McPherson (2007) also pointed out the importance of advisors in self-access centers. With the use of a self-access center, advisors are there to help L2 learners by giving advice, including pointing out strengths and weakness, which may not be realized by learners themselves. In another study by Lee (1998), the author implemented a self-study program of the English language among university students in Hong Kong. The results of the study revealed that the more enthusiastic learners became more motivated and self-disciplined, while less enthusiastic learners were lazy overall, even though all the learners

came into the program voluntarily. Additionally, there were some learners who were more ready for SDL than others regardless of their motivation level, but Lee argued that such readiness could be trainable during the self-learning program. Rivers (2001) conducted a study on experienced self-directed learners' strategy use. He found that experienced learners exhibited similar strategy use in assessment, learner autonomy, and SDL. Finally, Gieve and Clark (2005) compared Chinese learners of English living in the UK to European learners, in order to investigate if SDL is influenced by contextual factors or cultural traits. By analyzing written journal entries, they found that even Chinese learners, who were supposed to have low learner autonomy, could appreciate SDL. While the researchers noted the possibility that the participating Chinese English learners were atypical Chinese learners, they concluded that with the appropriate conditions, self-directed L2 learners generally can be flexible and adapt to SDL.

Thus, from the limited number of studies available for SDL in language learning, one can conclude that motivation, metacognitive skills (self-regulated skills), and social support seem to play roles in successful SDL. However, in truly SDL contexts, where learners do not have access to self-access centers or affiliated institutions, self-directed L2 learners do not necessarily have social supports. In such situations, the other factors that support SDL, motivation and metacognitive skills, become even more important. The next section discusses motivation; self-regulated learning and metacognitive skills; and the component that is directly related to SDL, learner autonomy.

MOTIVATION

For SDL learners, motivation is an important component that leads them to initiate SDL, as discussed above. Motivation, in fact, is also recognized as an important

component in L2 learning in general. There have been numerous studies on how motivation plays a role in L2 learning. For example, Yashima (2000) examined how motivation influenced L2 learners' learning outcomes. Using college-level EFL students as participants, she found that motivation and TOEFL scores are correlated; the more motivated the students were, the higher TOEFL scores they had. There are other studies that found a positive effect of motivation on L2 learning (e.g., Lukmani, 1972; Clément, et al., 1977; Vandergrift, 2005). In fact, motivation is considered to be the most influential factor on achievement among other affective factors in L2 learning, such as attitudes toward the learning situation and motivational orientations (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). However, despite its importance, scholars have not been able to reach an agreement regarding what exactly L2 motivation is.

Motivation has been studied in the field of L2 learning at least since the 1950s. Researchers have been attempting to identify what characteristics are particular to L2 learning when it comes to motivation. Scholars have developed several notable theoretical frameworks for L2 motivation. Among them, three models—the integrativeness-instrumentality dichotomy, self-determination theory, and L2 Motivational Self System—are discussed below.

The Integrativeness-Instrumentality Dichotomy

For a long time, L2 motivation had been influenced by social psychology. In the beginning, Gardner and Lambert (1959) developed a L2 motivation framework, namely, the integrativeness-instrumentality dichotomy. Integrativeness refers to an L2 learner's willingness to integrate into the target L2 community. Together with attitudes towards the L2 community, integrativeness shapes an L2 learner's motivation. On the other hand, instrumentality refers to the fact that an L2 learner learns a language because of external

incentives (e.g., job, money). In this dichotomy, Gardner and Lambert believed that integrativeness, or willingness to assimilate into the L2 community, is important in order to be a successful L2 learner. While many studies provided support for their claim (e.g., Anisfield & Lambert, 1961; Clément, Gardner, & Smythe, 1980), several studies, especially the ones that focused on FL contexts, could not find any support for their claim. For example, Lukmani (1972) investigated EFL high school students' motivation in India. Based on the survey data, the author found that learners' instrumental motivation, rather than integrativeness, and English proficiency were significantly correlated. Clément and Kruidenier (1983) denied Gardner and Lambert's claim, as they found that integrativeness is not a significant predictor of L2 acquisition; instead, instrumental orientation, travel, knowledge, and friendship are the important learning orientations of L2 motivation.

Faced with these empirical questions about Gardner and Lambert's model, Oxford and Shearin (1994) argued that L2 motivation theory should to include theories from outside of the social-psychology discipline. Ely (1986) explained that it is not always easy to distinguish integrativeness and instrumentality. Dörnyei (1994) also argued that L2 learning is a complex process that includes factors such as learners' identity and attitudes towards the L2 community. Since L2 learning cannot be comparable to learning of other subject (e.g., math), L2 motivation needs to be understood as varied and eclectic. Further, Dörnyei (1998) claimed that the definition of integrativeness should be reconsidered. He argued that with the rise of globalization, integrating into the target community may not be an appropriate definition for integrativeness.

The Self-Determination Theory in L2

Scholars started to reframe the L2 motivation theory. In the late 1990s, Noels and her colleagues began incorporating the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) into L2 motivation. SDT is a well-grounded theory in the general educational psychology field originally proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985). SDT consists of amotivation; four kinds of extrinsic motivation (EM), which are external regulation, introjected, identified, and integrated; and intrinsic motivation (IM). These different motivational orientations are on a continuum (with amotivation on the further left and intrinsic motivation on the further right). The more self-determined (or autonomous) the learner is, the more intrinsically motivated. In educational settings in general, Reeve (2002) explained the benefits of the SDT model. With the application of SDT, researchers found that (1) autonomous learners take advantage of educational settings, and that (2) learners benefit from an autonomy-supporting pedagogy.

A Canadian scholar, Noels, and her colleagues began to integrate the SDT into L2 motivation research. Noels, Clément, and Pelletier (1999) found that IM is correlated with positive L2 learning outcomes. In this study, they also found that IM is also correlated with the teacher's perceived communication style. Namely, the more students perceived that the teacher controlled their learning and was less informative, the weaker IM they had. Noels, Pelletier, Clément, and Vallerand (2000) found SDT's relevance to L2 motivation via the correlation study of SDT and Clément and Kruidenier's (1983) four orientations. In a 2001 study by Noels, Clément, and Pelletier, they compared Gardner and Lambert's dichotomy and SDT. They found that integrative orientations are correlated with all motivational orientations in SDT but most strongly with IM. However, as they indicated in the previous study (Noels et al., 2000), the relationship between SDT and integrativeness is not straightforward, as integrativeness can be considered both IM

and EM in some sense. In 2003, Wu added a new dimension to SDT in L2 motivation. With his experiments with young EFL learners, he found that immediate learning environment also influenced learners' IM.

Further, researchers have been conducting research in different learning contexts and/or with different focuses, such as Japanese EFL learners (Yashima, 2002), Chinese heritage learners (Comanaru and Noels, 2009), metacognitive strategy use and SDT (Vandergrift, 2005), and Korean EFL learners (Pae, 2008). Pae's study precipitated another debate in regards to the relationships between SDT and Gardner and Lambert's dichotomy. In his study, contrary to previous studies by Noels and her associates, all the motivational orientations in SDT, including IM, and integrativeness turned out statistically different. Murphy (2011) conducted a qualitative study on the influence of IM in L2 learning in the distance-learning setting. With the learners of L2 French, German, and Spanish, she found that although adult distance L2 learners had negative emotions in the middle of the semester, they eventually overcame them, as they utilized various cognitive and metacognitive social strategies derived from IM.

All this empirical work supports the assertion that SDT is applicable in L2 settings. Ehrman, Leaver, and Oxford (2003) argued that SDT was one of the most important theories to reframe L2 motivation theory in the 1990s. Dörnyei (2005) called this decade the "cognitive-situated period" (p.74). Unlike Gardner and Lambert's dichotomy, which sees L2 motivation as static, SDT and other theories in this decade changed the view of L2 motivation to a dynamic, situation-specific entity. Dickinson (1995) asserted that the social-psychology approach could not reveal the relationship between autonomy and motivation, which is important to understand learners' performance and individual difference. To date, SDT is still an influential theory in L2 motivation research.

L2 Motivational Self System

On the other hand, Dörnyei and his colleagues investigated the constituents of L2 motivation in the early 2000s. Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) conducted a longitudinal study on L2 motivation dynamics. They surveyed over 8,500 13-14-year-old Hungarian L2 students in 1993 and again six years later. Contrary to their expectations, Hungarian L2 learners' motivation to learn foreign languages decreased over time, with the exception of English. They interpreted these results using the unique characteristics of the English language. They explained that young Hungarian L2 learners potentially considered English as a global language. In another study, using SEM with their Hungarian L2 learners, Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) found that integrativeness is the single most powerful factor that affects L2 motivation, with which L2 learners put effort into learning as well as language choice. They also proposed the other constructs of L2 motivation: instrumentality, attitudes towards L2 speakers, vitality of L2 community, milieu, self-confidence, and cultural interest.

In 2005, Dörnyei proposed a new L2 motivation theory, called L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). The theory includes the concepts of Ideal L2 Self, Ought-To L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience. The Ideal L2 Self is basically identical to Gardner and Lambert's integrativeness. However, Dörnyei reinterpreted Gardner and Lambert's integrativeness and relabeled it based on some empirical work (e.g., Lamb, 2004; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2002) to fit in various L2 learning contexts, particularly to make English in relating to globalization more explainable (Csizér & Magid, 2014). Continuing the parallels to SDT, Dörnyei (2009) himself believed that IM is a close match to L2 learning experience, the Ideal L2 Self to integrativeness, and extrinsic motivation to the Ought-To L2 Self. Dörnyei (2009) argued that these imaginary selves must exist in the first place. That is, a L2 learner has to consciously imagine his/her possible self.

L2MSS has been attracting L2 motivation scholars, as it has introduced new insights into the field: namely, the importance of self-concept and future guides. Dörnyei (2014) argued that possible selves are mental images that an L2 learner can intentionally foster. L2 motivation scholars in recent years have been working on the applicability of L2MSS. Papi (2010) examined the relationship between L2 anxiety and L2MSS and found that the Ought-To L2 Self positively correlates with anxiety. Henry (2011) found that, with an application of L2MSS, L2 learners' learning experience in L2 can influence the formation of an L3 possible self. Magid (2012) studied L2MSS using Chinese middle schoolers learning English as a foreign language. Using SEM, he found that the Chinese family has an impact on the formation of the Ideal L2 Self. Kim (2012) compared Gardner and Lambert's dichotomy to L2MSS. Using a regression analysis, he found that L2MSS was a better predictor of Korean EFL learners' proficiency levels than Gardner and Lambert's dichotomy. He also discovered that Ought-To L2 Self only functions at cognitive levels while Ideal L2 Self positively works with both cognitive and affective levels.

From the previous decades of research, it is apparent that researchers have put considerable effort into investigating L2 motivation and its influence on L2 learning. The three influential L2 motivation theoretical frameworks discussed above are not mutually exclusive theories. Rather, they intersect to some extent (McEown, Noels, & Chaffee, 2014). Particularly, the overlap of SDT with L2MSS is intriguing; McEown et al. (2014) discovered a strong correlation between integrated EM and Ideal L2 Self ($r = .66$). As adult L2 learners may not learn foreign languages purely out of curiosity, it is very much understandable that L2 learners' Ideal L2 Self can be influenced by EM to some extent. Moreover, recent research on L2MSS suggests that the concept of self is important in L2 motivation. For example, Csizér and Magid (2014) argued that self-related issue can

impact L2 learning in general and L2 motivation in particular. More research is forthcoming to reveal the relationship between the L2 learner's self, L2 motivation, and L2 learning.

SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND METACOGNITIVE SKILLS

L2 learners in SDL need to be self-regulated in order to be successful in their learning. There is a strong tie between self-regulated learning and metacognitive skills. Zimmerman (1990) defined self-regulated learners as "metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning" (p.4). Self-regulated learners are motivated and can utilize metacognitive and behavioral strategies to achieve goals. Similarly, Pintrich (1999) also offered a definition of self-regulated learning; however, in his definition, self-regulated learning is a set of strategies that regulates learners' cognition and resource management. Zimmerman (2002) proposed a model of the learning process of a self-regulated learner. In self-regulated learning, there are three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. In each phase, the self-regulated learner uses different strategies to maximize learning benefits. In the forethought phase, the learner analyzes the task that s/he is about to tackle. S/he also has self-motivation beliefs to initiate the task. In the performance phase, the learner attempts to control the learning as well as observe their learning. Lastly, in the self-reflection phase, the learner evaluates his/her learning and responds to the learning outcome. In these phases, it is rather obvious that metacognitive strategies play a significant role, as the learner consistently needs to monitor his/her learning to ensure success.

For the past few decades, the importance of metacognition and related components (e.g., strategies, skills, etc.) has been discussed in the field of foreign

language education. Metacognitive strategies are defined as "general skills through which learners manage, direct, regulate, guide their learning; i.e., planning, monitoring and evaluating" (Wenden, 1998, p. 519). Anderson (2007) explained that metacognition consists of five intersecting components: preparing and planning, selecting and using strategies, monitoring learning, orchestrating strategies, and evaluating learning. Empirical research focuses on several aspects of metacognition, such as knowledge (Li & Munby, 1996; Schoonen, Hulstijn, & Bossers, 1998), beliefs (Graham, 2006; Zhang & Cui, 2010), and strategy use (White, 1995; Rivers, 2001). Some studies targeted distance learners and self-directed learners. For example, White (1995) compared two groups of students (in-class and distance learning) in terms of strategy use. She found that the use of metacognitive strategies was predominantly influenced by the learner's learning mode. The participants in White's study demonstrated wider and increased metacognitive strategy use in the context of distance learning. Zhang and Cui (2010) investigated Chinese learners' beliefs about distance learning. Their results revealed that more experienced distance language learners strongly believed in the positive influence of an autonomous approach on their learning.

LEARNER AUTONOMY

Related to self-regulated learning and SDL is autonomy (or "learner autonomy," which is the term specifically used in the field of foreign language education). Particularly, scholars in SDL, such as Knowles (1975) and Candy (1991), claimed that one of the crucial dimensions of SDL is autonomy. There is a presupposition that SDL learners are, to some extent, autonomous by definition. The definition of learner autonomy by Holec (1981) and Benson (2013) is rather simple: taking control of one's

own learning. Littlewood (1996) provided an anatomy of learner autonomy. According to her, the basic components of learner autonomy related to L2 learning are ability and willingness to make choices. Ability is affected by knowledge and skills, while willingness is affected by motivation and confidence. These affecting factors influence each other as well. Littlewood's conceptual framework suggests that learner autonomy has close relationships to strategies and motivation. With the basic components, L2 learners make choices at the task level or general life level.

Both learner autonomy and SDL for L2 teaching and learning were developed alongside several historical shifts. Gremmo and Riley (1995) explained that social transformations, such as minority rights movements, reactions against behaviorism, development of technology, and increasing numbers of students in higher education, influenced learner autonomy and self-directed L2 learning. They also argued that past research had demonstrated that self-directed L2 learning works for anybody, regardless of language difficulties. Due to the increasing needs of self-directed L2 learning, self-access centers were founded in the 1960s and early 70s. As a result, the concept of counselors, who help self-access L2 learners, was also developed.

Learner autonomy is influenced by several different factors. Cotterall (1995) surveyed 139 adult ESL learners about their beliefs about learner autonomy and analyzed the obtained data with factor analysis. According to her discovery, there were six groups of factors that affect learner autonomy: (1) role of the teacher, (2) role of feedback, (3) learner independence, (4) learner confidence in study ability, (5) experience of language learning, and (6) approach to studying. For example, in the role of the teacher category, an L2 learner who believes the statement, "I like the teacher to offer help" is not autonomous. Since L2 learners are not necessarily autonomous from the beginning, but

learner autonomy is an important component for successful life-long L2 learning, scholars have been exploring how to promote learner autonomy.

Learner Autonomy and L2 Learning Strategies

Much empirical work on learner autonomy in the past focused on L2 learning strategies. L2 learning strategies can actually be observed in learning as forms of exercising learner autonomy. Additionally, strategies can be taught. Chang (2005) examined whether or not incorporating self-regulated learning strategies (use of metacognitive strategies such as monitoring) promoted learner autonomy in a web-based EFL course. The participants monitored the time they used as well as learning strategies to complete a learning unit and wrote reflective summaries over a semester. They also compared what they did between learning units, so that they could improve in the next unit. After a semester of the intervention, the participants became more responsible in their learning and intrinsically motivated. They also welcomed more challenges.

Similarly, Lee (1998) used a learner-autonomy-supporting curriculum with her EFL students in SDL settings. Based on the elements that support learner autonomy—namely, voluntariness, learner choice, flexibility, teacher support, and peer support—the participants drafted contracts about what they would achieve in their learning, had an option to negotiate their learning curriculum, were offered teacher support, and tracked their learning. The interview data yielded mixed results. While some students liked the method and became very enthusiastic, some students were not excited about SDL. Most of the students agreed that the program was worthwhile but did not intend to continue without the presence of the teacher. Although Cotterall (1995) thought relying on the teacher is not the profile of an autonomous learner, teacher support is normally what L2 learners think important, especially if they are taking classes. Thus, relying on the teacher

does not necessarily preclude learner autonomy. As Benson (1997) argued, contexts influence how L2 learners frame their autonomy.

Gan (2004) conducted a survey study on SDL attitudes and strategies in an EFL context. Using a modified strategy inventory for language learning, originally developed by Oxford, he found that attitudes were not correlated with L2 learners' proficiency levels but strategy uses were. In his study, L2 learners who were confident and self-directed, who held strong beliefs about the learner's role in L2 learning, or who would take strong initiatives in learning were likely to use a variety of L2 learning strategies. He concluded that having positive attitudes towards self-directed language learning alone is not sufficient for successful self-directed language learning.

On the other hand, expert L2 learners exercise full learner autonomy. Rivers (2001) analyzed expert L2 learners' autonomy and strategy use in SDL settings. The participants were eleven adult Americans who were studying a third language (Georgian or Kazakh). They were given two types of instruments (a daily survey and a weekly survey) to elicit their strategy uses. All participants had high learner autonomy; for instance, they asked for modifications of the courses such as teacher feedback, teaching method, and activities, based on their self-assessments. They wanted to take control of their learning in that they tried to change the learning to suit their preferences. These learners also used different learning strategies based on their learning preferences.

Expanding from learner strategies, belief is another component that may affect learner strategies. Navarro and Thornton (2011) found different elements of learner autonomy. They investigated the relationship between learner beliefs and learners' actual actions as well as the interactions between learners and their advisors. They introduced the concept of PIME (planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating) to EFL students in the SDL setting at a college in Japan prior to SDL. They used qualitative data

(reflective journal, learner-advisor interactions, and self-reports) for analysis. After four months, they found that the learners were making decisions based on their beliefs. Moreover, the researchers found that the interactions with advisors were vital, as learners could reinterpret and change their original beliefs. However, the researchers pointed out that the participants had limited understandings of PIME. They concluded that the learners still needed more time for further development as sufficient SDL learners.

Learner Autonomy across Cultures

It can be assumed that especially learners from non-Western cultures may require extensive training to become autonomous learners. Ho and Crookall (1995) explained that learner autonomy is not typical in Chinese culture. Although they argued that it was possible to train Chinese learners to become autonomous, they require the concrete action of taking responsibility to develop their learner autonomy. Gieve and Clark (2005), on the other hand, found that Chinese learners could be as autonomous as and as grateful to the benefits of autonomy as European students. This may be due to situational difference, as these Chinese learners were living in the UK, so they might have been already exposed to some level of autonomous learning.

The past empirical work demonstrated that L2 learners can be trainable in learner autonomy by using different learning strategies. Moreover, the benefits of learner autonomy can be appreciated by any L2 learner, regardless of culture. However, cultural and individual differences may affect the readiness of a learner to engage in autonomous behavior. Finally, learner autonomy is situated; L2 learners may display different levels of learner autonomy depending on the context in which they are learning.

Thus, in SDL, self-regulated learning and related components (motivation and metacognitive skills besides aptitude) as well as learner autonomy are important to

successfully continue SDL. While there are several ways to promote these components, the present research focused on two aspects of language learning: reading and technology. In the following section, these two aspects are discussed.

READING

Reading is one of the four skills that are focused in L2 learning along with listening, speaking, and writing. Various components for both lower-level and higher-level processes are involved in L2 reading. However, components of lower-level processes, such as vocabulary, require a lot of time to improve and thus are challenging in L2 reading instruction. Extensive Reading (ER) by far seems to be the best curriculum to increase reading proficiency. With ER, L2 learners are encouraged to read as much as possible. Since reading should not cause stress for the students, they may read graded readers. They are also asked to select the materials and topics they want to read. Due to this process of taking responsibility for their reading (i.e., selecting readings on their own), ER is considered to promote learner autonomy. In this section, the process of L2 reading, the characteristics of Japanese reading, and ER are discussed.

Process of L2 Reading

Reading involves several factors and aspects. Grabe (2008), in his book about L2 reading, explained that L2 reading has cognitive, affective, and other aspects. In regards to cognitive aspects, there are two levels of processes involved in reading in general. The lower-level process includes components such as word recognition, working memory capacity, and syntactic processing, and the higher-level process includes components such as background knowledge, ability to make inferences, strategy use, metacognitive awareness and attention. Grabe explained that all readers use both lower- (bottom-up)

and higher-level (top-down) processes to read. These processes are not independent in that a reader needs to have sufficient lower-level skills for higher-level skills to work well. Thus, all cognitive components are important for reading in general. Additionally, according to Grabe, affective variables such as motivation, attitude, and anxiety, as well as other variables such as text exposure, identity, socioeconomic status, and family beliefs are involved in a learner's reading process.

Particularly in L2 reading, Grabe argued that factors such as orthographic differences, automaticity/fluency, the amount and breadth of vocabulary acquired, and L1 literacy affect L2 reading proficiency. Eye movement research, which is the most common way to examine orthographic processing, suggests that logographic language speakers (e.g., Chinese, Japanese) have a shorter region of fixation and a longer fixation time (Rayner, 2009) than the speakers of the languages that use the Roman alphabet. So, when an L1 Japanese reader reads an English text, it is likely that s/he reads slowly, which also affects reading fluency development. The amount and breadth of vocabulary is crucial L2 reading proficiency. According to Nation (2006), about 98% of the words (9,000 word families in English) in texts must be known in order for an English reader to read fluently and comfortably. Compared to L1 young readers who, on average, learn about 2,000-4,000 new words a year, it is probably impossible for L2 readers to be exposed to such a high number of words though L2 classes alone. Further, previous research suggest that about 20% of L2 reading comprehension is accounted for by L1 literacy, about 30% of it is accounted for by L2 linguistic proficiency, and the remaining 50% is unexplored (e.g., Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Lee & Schallert, 1997). Hence, it is also important to utilize L1 literacy knowledge to support L2 reading.

Thus, L2 reading is a multidimensional, complex process. L2 learners need to spend a lot of time to improve L2 reading proficiency. Particularly for adult L2 learners

with sufficient L1 literacy, some important aspects of L2 reading, such as reading strategies, can be learned explicitly. Moreover, background knowledge could be learned in L1 to support L2 reading. However, acquiring the huge amount of vocabulary is still challenging for many L2 learners because (1) the amount by itself can discourage (or demotivate) L2 learners, and (2) what teachers can do for students to increase vocabulary knowledge is limited compared to other aspects of L2 reading.

Characteristics of Japanese Reading

As discussed above, L1-L2 orthographic differences affect L2 learners' reading process (Grabe, 2008). For L1 English readers, reading Japanese texts is likely challenging due to several reasons compared to other L2s that use the Roman alphabet. The first reason is the absence of word boundaries. That means, in Japanese texts, all letters are consecutively written without any space. In contrast, English texts have spaces between words. This absence of word boundaries makes it difficult for L2 readers to read Japanese texts, as they may not know where a word starts and where it ends, especially when the texts are written in all phonetic letters (i.e., all in hiragana or in katakana). Kanji characters are supposed to help readers process Japanese texts more easily. According to Sainio Hyönä, Bingushi, and Bertram's (2007) eye movement research, L1 Japanese readers could read faster when sentences were all written in hiragana and were also spaced rather than not spaced, while they could read at the same speed when they were not spaced but written in a combination of kanji and hiragana. Hence, kanji characters help Japanese readers with word segmentation.

However, kanji characters also pose another challenge to L2 readers without the background of Chinese characters. Kanji characters are ideographs that convey meanings. They are used for nouns, stems of verbs and adjectives, etc. About 30% of authentic

Japanese texts are comprised of kanji (Matsuda, 1998). One of the challenging parts of kanji is that you may not know how to read kanji words, which makes it difficult for learners to search for the meaning in a dictionary. Moreover, even if L2 learners know how to read a particular kanji, they may still not be able to look it up since most kanji characters have at least two different pronunciations, and many Japanese words consist of two kanji compounds. The pronunciation that the L2 learner knows might not necessarily apply to the kanji word that s/he is about to look up. Thus, L2 learners may eventually be able to search for the meaning of kanji, but the process is time-consuming and may take a lot of effort. Due to these characteristics of kanji, as can easily be assumed, Banno and Ikeda (2009) found that L2 Japanese learners without the background of Chinese characters feel that kanji characters are difficult to learn regardless of their actual knowledge of kanji. As a result of not knowing kanji, even advanced-level JSL learners tend to avoid reading authentic Japanese reading materials (Kawana, 2012); they tend to stick to the materials that are provided in class, where the use of kanji is limited to what they have learned and/or where phonetic guides and glosses are provided. Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) argued that L2 Japanese reading can cause more anxiety compared to other L2 languages that are closer to English. In order to encourage L2 Japanese learners to read more, scholars and instructors have recently started to explore the potential of extensive reading.

Extensive Reading

Extensive Reading (ER), formerly known as the Book Flood Program and also known as Pleasure Reading (or Reading for Pleasure), or occasionally Recreational Reading, has gained popularity in both L1 and L2 reading classes around the world. These programs are considered to be effective for increasing reading proficiency and

potentially other aspects of L2, as they can expose readers to a lot of vocabulary in context and they can increase reading motivation by fostering readers' sense of accomplishment. Day (2011), one of the scholarly advocates for ER in L2, claimed that ER increases overall literacy, reading rates, motivation, attitudes, and overall proficiency in L2. ER has usually been incorporated in classroom settings, where readings have been assigned to students.

Empirical work also supports these claims. In L1 reading, Scammacca et al. (2007) found that ER can be effective for Pre-K to second graders even when implemented with low-cost materials if teachers are trained well. In L2 reading, Elley and Mangubhai (1983) examined the effectiveness of ER on young Fijian EFL learners. They found that the ER group outperformed the control group in terms of vocabulary, grammar, listening, and writing. Constantinos (1994) reported on two groups that read books differently. One group read books that the group members liked, and the other group continued to read the class textbooks with a dictionary. After six weeks, while the former group members could understand the textbooks that they had struggled with before pleasure reading, the latter group members continued to struggle. Similarly, Beglar, Hunt, and Kite (2012) compared three pleasure reading groups and an intensive reading group in the setting of college EFL classes. They found that all pleasure reading groups outperformed the intensive reading group in regards to reading rate. Tse (1996) studied ER through a case study. Her participant's perception of reading competence in English had increased. The participant also commented that she had learned about American culture through her exposure to authentic texts. These positive results are also found in online reading. Silva (2009) reported that students showed positive attitudes towards online (extensive) reading. He also argued that students and teachers can work together to find readings on the Internet. The development of technology has expanded

the potential of ER. Arnold (2009) conducted an online ER program in an advanced German class. He found that some participants intentionally sought more difficult reading materials to challenge themselves even though it is not encouraged in ER. Yet, using ER to learn L2 also requires some caution. Lee, Schallert, and Kim (2015) found that ER may not positively affect adolescent L2 learners with low-proficiency levels, while it does for the mid- and higher-proficiency groups of L2 learners. Although there were positive gains in grammatical knowledge, the attitudes of their adolescent participants with low-proficiency levels towards ER were rather negative.

In the field of Japanese language education, ER is still a newer concept. Only several studies have been conducted to date. The oldest research in Japanese ER was published in 2002 by Leung. Using the researcher herself as a participant, Leung reported a diary study of Japanese ER that she recorded over 20 weeks. Comparing pre- and post-test of Japanese vocabulary, she found that she had increased her vocabulary knowledge. Her attitude towards reading also became more positive compared to the earlier phase of the study. One challenge she faced during her study was a difficulty finding Japanese books to read by herself until she connected with a Japanese lecturer who teaches Japanese ER.

Hitotsugi and Day (2004) implemented an ER program in a second-semester Japanese class at a university in the U.S. With the ten-week ER program reading children's books, the students improved their general Japanese proficiency as well as attitudes towards and motivation in learning Japanese. Hitotsugi and Day also mentioned a challenging aspect of the Japanese ER program, which is that there were no age-appropriate materials available for beginning-level adult JFL learners. Tabata-Sandom and Macalister (2009) reported a case study of an ER program in a high school in New Zealand. The high school JFL learners read extensively over three months. After the

program, the students became more strategic and confident in reading in Japanese. They also increased their overall knowledge of the Japanese language. Similar to what Hitotsugi and Day discussed above, again, the authors mentioned a difficulty collecting reading materials appropriate for learners' levels. They also found that more advanced learners might show negative attitudes towards graded readers, which was congruent with some other ER studies in different languages (e.g., Arnold, 2009). Mikami and Harada (2011) examined the effect of ER on incidental vocabulary learning with Czech university students. They found that the students who engaged in ER acquired more words, and more of these words came from the ER books than from their classes. They further investigated the type of vocabulary the students acquired and found that the students learned more vocabulary words that appeared often in the readings; they also learned more nouns rather than verbs or adjectives.

Kondo-Brown (2006) investigated the affective variables associated with Japanese ER and analyzed subcomponents originally defined by Mori (2002) with EFL learners. The subcomponents are (1) intrinsic value, (2) extrinsic utility value, (3) attainment value, and (4) expectancy for success. She found that learners' knowledge and attitudes towards kanji could be directly associated with IM to read Japanese. She also reported that the participants who were intrinsically motivated to read in Japanese actually read volitionally compared to the ones who were more extrinsically motivated. Additionally, in Awano, Kawamoto, and Matsuda's (2012) book on Japanese ER, a concern about graded readers was reported. For JFL learners, even easier-level graded readers are still difficult. This may be due to the fact that the class label and the actual students' levels do not match.

There are also several studies about Japanese ER in the context of JSL. For example, Matsui, Mikami and Kanayama (2012) reported a series of the ER program

implementation in a JSL program at the university level. Most students who participated in the ER program favored ER, were more motivated, and felt that their Japanese proficiency had improved. On the other hand, they also reflected that there were not enough graded readers to continue ER. Kawana (2012) detailed an ER program for advanced-level university JSL learners. The students reported their ER experiences favorably. They felt accomplished reading graded readers. They also utilized strategies when encountering unknown words, such as guessing from context rather than using dictionaries. Kawana was also convinced that ER would lead to autonomous Japanese readers, as the students reported that they would want to try to read Japanese texts on their own after the ER program.

The research introduced above was mostly conducted in formal education contexts. Yet, similar results were reported in informal learning settings as well. An intervention by Cho and Krashen (1994) found that, even without assigning reading, the participants learned a significant amount of vocabulary and increased their listening comprehension as well as perceived competence of speaking through recreational reading. Janopoulos (1986) reported that recreational reading in L2 and L2 writing proficiency are correlated. Although there are few studies on RR, it appears that recreational reading has similar benefits to ER. However, Nishino (2007)'s ER study suggests that recreational reading in a truly informal learning setting may be difficult to implement. In her study, she tutored two middle schoolers using ER for 2.5 years. She found that, although these two middle schoolers had increased their motivation to read in English, their motivation decreased over time and they quit reading in the end, especially as they started preparing for college entrance examinations. As discussed above, Leung (2002) reported her self-study with the ER method over 20 weeks. However, in Leung's case, she had access to a Japanese lecturer who taught ER. She also seemed to do the ER

project for her graduate reading course, even though it was not clearly mentioned. Hence, her ER project report was not necessarily done in an informal setting.

As such, one can conclude that ER, regardless of context (i.e., classrooms or informal learning settings), provides L2 learners with affective and linguistic benefits. Despite these benefits, not many programs (or individuals) incorporate ER into their learning. Day and Bamford (1998) explained several reasons for not using ER in classrooms, such as cost and teacher's role. In SDL, it can be assumed that L2 learners are unlikely to use the ER method to learn L2 unless they are also language teachers, as they may not know there is such a way to learn a language. In the context of Japanese ER in particular, it is much less likely that L2 Japanese learners would adopt ER, as they may not be intrinsically motivated to read in Japanese; they have negative feelings towards kanji; and they cannot collect Japanese reading materials.

TECHNOLOGY

Over several decades, L2 teachers have used videos and recordings to provide L2 learners with more authentic images and audio. Now, the Internet and more user-friendly interfaces enable L2 learners to explore more options on their own. For example, L2 learners can study free or low-cost language learning materials on the Internet. They can also read Internet news and watch YouTube videos from the target L2 community. Additionally, with Web 2.0 technologies, they can make friends over the Internet through language exchange websites. Finally, some may want to practice speaking or writing on a language exchange SNS, such as *Lang-8*, where L2 learners write something in the target language and native speakers correct their mistakes and/or make alternative suggestions. Barnett (1993) explained that three aspects of computer technology allow users to employ

cognitive and metacognitive strategies, which will promote learner autonomy. These aspects are database organization of materials, computer-assisted language learning and learner training, and use of menus to organize programs. McLoughlin and Lee (2007) summarized the benefits of the tools and technologies created with the Web 2.0 technologies as follows:

> The socially based tools and technologies of the Web 2.0 movement are capable of supporting informal conversation, reflexive dialogue and collaborative content generation, enabling access to a wide raft of ideas and representations. Used appropriately, these tools can shift control to the learner, through promoting learner agency, autonomy and engagement in social networks that straddle multiple real and virtual learning spaces independent of physical, geographic, institutional and organisational boundaries. (p. 28)

Thus, technology advocates argued that technology may promote learner autonomy and related strategies. In the subsections below, the following perspectives on technology are discussed: (1) technology and autonomy, (2) technology and learner motivation, and (3) technology and reading.

Technology and Learner Autonomy

Technologies have the potential to promote learner autonomy as briefly discussed above. Some empirical work also supports this claim. Murray (1999) used an interactive video program with fourth-year French learners to investigate the effect of learner autonomy on their learning. As the program let the students study at their own pace, they enjoyed the program a lot and experienced decreased performance anxiety. However, although some participants thought that the program helped improve their proficiency, the author could not tell whether or not the proficiency improvement was because of the program alone, as the participants engaged in several other concurrent activities.

Bordonaro (2003) interviewed and observed advanced-level ESL learners who were studying English using technology with the SDL method. She found that the

changes in learning environment also changed learners' perceptions, which in turn made participants use learning strategies more consciously. However, she could not tell if technology itself actually promoted the participants' learner autonomy, as the participants did not use technology in order to become better learners. She concluded that successful L2 learners in SDL may not require autonomy to learn L2, as they are already self-sufficient.

Luke (2006) incorporated technology in a fourth-semester Spanish class using an inquiry-based learning method. The student participants engaged in study sessions with a software application that virtualized a study abroad context. The author provided three different ways to promote learner autonomy: (1) students had choices; (2) students had time for self-directed learning; and (3) the teacher invited students to negotiate the curriculum. He concluded that, overall, students increased learner autonomy, although there were a variety of reactions from the students. Some students wanted more grammar instruction; some thought the program was interesting; and others thought sitting in front of computers for research was a waste of time.

Figura and Jarvis (2007) examined intermediate-level EFL students' use of L2 learning strategies with computer-based learning materials in the self-access language-learning context. Using a survey, interview, and snapshot observations, they found that the students used a variety of cognitive and metacognitive strategies that promote learner autonomy, while only less than half of students used social strategies. The authors also found that the students used their L1 to a great extent in the self-access center.

Sanprasert (2010) conducted an intervention study on Thai EFL students. The experimental group of students received instructions through a course management system, while the control group studied in a traditional classroom. By comparing the pre- and post-surveys on learner autonomy as well as participants' journals, the author found

that the use of a course management system promoted learner autonomy in terms of the role of teacher, the role of feedback, learner independence, learner confidence, and experience of L2 learning, all of which were adopted from Cotterall's (1995) categorization.

Based on the previous research introduced above, one can conclude that technology has potential in L2 learning but does not necessarily guarantee an increase in learner autonomy. The previous research suggests that whether or not technology supports learner autonomy depends on contexts, learner preferences, and individual differences.

Technology and Motivation

Several studies reported that technology improves L2 learners' motivation. Liu and Chu (2010) investigated the effectiveness of an ubiquitous game on listening comprehension. They found that not only was the game effective for listening comprehension, the participants were also motivated to use the game in their learning.

Yang and Chen (2007) investigated the effect of a technology-enhanced English class in Taiwan. The participating 10th graders experienced six different Internet-based activities (group emailing, web-based course, email writing, English homepage design, video conference, and chat room discussion). Overall, the participants displayed positive attitudes towards the use of the Internet in their language learning. However, Yang and Chen also found that Internet-based activities do not necessarily override traditional classroom activities; some participants preferred the traditional way of learning a language.

Although there is little research on technology in JFL/JSL contexts, the previous research suggests the effectiveness of technology use in JFL/JSL. Warschauer and

Meskill (2000) reported a case study by a Japanese teacher at Haverford College. The teacher incorporated a telecollaboration project with Japanese students. She reported that the project helped the students improve the four basic language skills and that the students wrote more with computers. Similarly, Kubota (1999) reported that although her students found online reading in Japanese difficult, they liked writing on computers. She also found that the students were more motivated and had less anxiety during the project. Since more kanji usage is encouraged as one advances in one's studies, Japanese students prefer to type kanji rather than handwrite them, so that they can use more of them. A study conducted by Fukui and Kawaguchi (2015) demonstrated that the use of SNS promote learners' senses of belongingness to a learning community and help learners build networks, which in turn improves their motivation.

Regardless of its usefulness, L2 learners' perception of and readiness to use technology is also important when incorporating technology in L2 learning. For example, Jones (2001) found that L2 learners are willing to use technology in L2 learning. In the previously discussed research by Figura and Jarvis (2007), the survey results revealed that the majority of the students with self-access language learning liked to use computers in their language learning. Viberg and Gronlund (2012) investigated willingness to use smartphones in L2 learning. They surveyed Chinese and Swedish EFL students and found that L2 learners overall are willing to use a smartphone in their learning regardless of cultural background. Rather, the difference they found was at the individual level. Some participants were not willing to use smartphones in L2 learning because they did not have good mobile phones to start with.

Past empirical work suggests that L2 learners in general welcome the use of technologies in their learning, and technologies themselves may increase learner autonomy. Such positive emotions arise partially from the affordances of technologies,

attractiveness of user interfaces, as well as the entertainment that technologies bring (e.g., games). Yet, technology use in L2 learning may still depend on individual preference and contexts, as some studies also suggest that L2 learners may not actually use technologies provided regardless of their initial attitudes towards the use of technology.

Technology and Reading

As the Internet is a popular resource for L2 learning with technology, reading and technology should be able to integrate well. Beaman (2006) argued that teens enjoy reading online. Since kids have a short attention span, they can comfortably read novels with graphics. Beaman also explained that with online reading, kids can have a multimedia experience. That is, not only do they read a particular novel, but they also can read/see/listen to related content such as reviews, videos, and podcasts. Online reading provides learners with an enriched learning experience.

As discussed above, Arnold (2009) and Silva (2009) explored the potential of ER using technology. Arnold used advanced-level German learners and found that the students were motivated to explore more difficult readings online. With EFL learners in Venezuela, Silva found that online ER can be a collaborative activity between teachers and students. Since there are so many texts out there on the Internet, learners can explore what they want to read on their own.

Technology also increases access to readings. Wang and Smith (2013) developed a reading distribution system for college-level EFL students in Japan. First, they developed in-house reading texts and uploaded them onto a server. Then, the system sent out readings on a regular basis. Despite being a voluntary project, more than 300 students engaged in reading and about 55 students responded to a survey. The analysis of the survey revealed that the students enjoyed the mobile reading and texts developed in-

house. Hsu et al. (2013) developed a personalized recommended reading system. In their study, about 90 readings of various levels and genres were uploaded to a server and distributed to the participants based on their preference. The high school EFL students in Taiwan enjoyed mobile reading and improved reading comprehension after reading personalized readings.

Thus, technology and reading can go hand in hand in L2 learning, although there is still a need for more research in this area. One thing that we need to keep in mind is that learners may prefer to read on paper to screens (Spencer, 2006). Spencer interviewed online course students in terms of preference of medium when reading. She found that learners overall preferred to read on paper. The participants noted several reasons why they preferred paper-based reading: portability, dependability, flexibility, and ergonomics.

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

In summary, motivation, self-regulated learning, metacognitive skills, and learner autonomy are important components in L2 learning, particularly in SDL settings. These components are not single-faceted but rather complex concepts. They also reciprocally influence each other and are context-dependent. In particular, motivation and learner autonomy have a strong relationship in that more autonomous learners tend to be more intrinsically motivated. While there are several ways to promote learner autonomy, technology and ER have great potential, which is why they are the focus of the present research.

Although most of the previous research has investigated EFL contexts, the research findings can also be applicable to JFL contexts. A few studies with JFL contexts

also support the mainstream findings. Technology stimulates L2 learners' motivation, and JFL learners feel that typing increases their chance to use kanji. In regard to extensive reading, L2 Japanese learners overall display positive attitudes towards ER.

However, one point that needs to be considered is the fact that Japanese is a less commonly taught language in the United States, as this fact posits a different context for JFL learners compared to EFL/ESL learners. English has been recognized as a global language (Lamb, 2004; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005); hence, learning English can be a natural desire for many learners worldwide. Further, because English is a required foreign language in schools in many countries, it is not challenging to find learning resources. In contrast, Japanese in the United States is a less commonly taught language, which means that there are fewer available resources and forms of support. Additionally, those who choose a less mainstream language may have different motivational orientations, mental readiness, and commitment that are not easily comparable to EFL/ESL learners. As most literature has looked at EFL/ESL learners and at self-directed learners with social support, this study on English-speaking JFL learners in SDL settings in the United States potentially provides new insights into L2 learning research.

Chapter 3: Method

The present study adopted a case-study methodology. There are two main reasons for using this particular methodology over the other options. First, the backgrounds of self-directed learners can vary tremendously. As can be seen in the present study as well, some self-directed learners learn Japanese for purely personal development, while others may learn for work. Some others may learn due to their Japanese heritage. Moreover, because the present study took place in the Southwestern U.S., where there is no large Japanese community, it is practically difficult to recruit many participants. Given both the small sample size and the participants' varied backgrounds, it is thus reasonable to adopt the case-study technique.

Merriam (1985) explained that a case study "intensively examines the interplay of all variables in order to provide as complete an understanding of the phenomenon as possible" (p.206). Case studies are based on naturalistic inquiry and grounded in real-life context. Due to their qualitative nature, triangulation is important in order to increase their validity. Merriam recommended using interviews, observations, and document analysis for triangulation. In the present study, I examined the cases of individual self-directed JFL learners. With respect to document analysis, journals, ER materials, and learners' own learning materials were used. Further, another data collection technique, an online survey, supplemented the interviews, observations, and document analysis.

PARTICIPANTS

Five adult JFL learners (four women and one man) in one of the following conditions were recruited for this study: (1) JFL learners who were learning Japanese in a

self-directed manner at the time of participation, (2) JFL learners who used to teach themselves Japanese, or (3) JFL learners who wished to teach themselves Japanese. These learners' proficiency and background as well as motivational orientations varied. What they had in common is that they were all motivated to learn Japanese in SDL settings of their own choice. Additionally, because the present study involved reading, all participants had to be able to read hiragana and katakana without any assistance. They all lived in a mid-sized city in Southwestern U.S. at the time of participation. Below are the descriptions of each participant. In order to protect his/her privacy, a pseudonym was given to each participant.

Courtney

Courtney was a heritage learner in her early 20s. She was a university student who was enrolled in the second semester of Japanese at her university at the time of study. She was an honors student and planned to major in psychology and Asian American Studies. Besides Japanese, she had learned Spanish for a year and had a little exposure to French, although she did not like to study Spanish. In her free time, she liked to read articles about new technology and science.

With respect to the Japanese language, Courtney's proficiency level was at an elementary level. She was taking Japanese to fulfill part of her foreign-language requirement. Despite her Japanese background, she grew up with almost no exposure to Japanese. However, she wished to learn more about the Japanese language and culture to understand more about her family. As she had been struggling with her class, she sought external help, encouraged by her boyfriend and relatives. During the summer prior to her participation in the study, she attempted to learn Japanese by herself with the aid of a tutor.

Courtney's current plan was to continue to learn Japanese to complete her requirements and to try to continue to learn the language if there was social support. At the time of study participation, she was planning to study abroad in Japan. When she was recruited for this study, she displayed a sense of excitement; as she mentioned later, she had believed that children's books could provide good opportunities to learn a language.

Grace

Grace was in her mid 40s and working for a company as a marketing manager. She was originally from Trinidad Tobago. Her hobbies were going to the gym and learning Japanese. Although she did not mention reading as her hobby, she said that reading was very important to her and she had to read every day. She did not learn Japanese and was not interested in Japanese language / culture prior to living in Japan. After obtaining her MBA in England, she happened to get a job in Japan and moved there in the late 1990s. Because she had general interests in learning foreign languages, she started learning with her company's support. Prior to learning Japanese, she had learned Spanish and French.

Her Japanese proficiency level was about intermediate level. However, because she focused so much on speaking and listening skills when she was learning Japanese (business Japanese), her reading and writing fluency were not high. Hence, in fact, her speaking / listening could be considered high-intermediate to advanced, whereas her reading / writing was low-intermediate. She occasionally struggled with katakana letters.

Since Grace had moved to the U.S. after living in Japan for six years, she had been continuously seeking ways to learn Japanese. She did not consider taking a class, as she thought that there would not be a class that exactly matched her level. Moreover, because her time was limited, she wanted to have high quality learning time rather than

spending time with non-native speaker friends. She had had several tutors, and she also tried to teach herself Japanese using various materials such as podcasts.

Grace's current plan was to continue to learn Japanese as much as possible and to obtain high quality materials and support. Upon participating in this study, she thought studying Japanese through pleasure reading would be interesting.

Felicia

Felicia was in her mid 30s and worked as a literature professor. Needless to say, reading was really important to her, and she often read English books. She had started learning Japanese about 18 months before the study. Besides Japanese, she had experience with learning Italian and Latin.

The reason Felicia started learning Japanese was her interest in Japanese food. Because she was also planning to visit Japan with her husband in the summer of 2014, she started teaching herself with a book given to her by a friend. She also sought a tutoring service to help her learn Japanese, as she did not know about community classes. She was also unsure how much she wanted to invest her time and effort in learning Japanese. After she came back from the trip, she continued to learn Japanese through self-directed learning with a kanji book as well as community classes. Her proficiency level was upper-beginner. At the time of the study, she was taking a break from learning Japanese for about six months after she had a son. However, she read a Japanese children's book to her son several times just for fun. Her current plan was to continue to learn Japanese as a hobby, although she was unsure how much time she could invest due to her childcare duties. As she was still looking for a way to get back to Japanese learning, she mentioned her excitement about participating in this study.

Hazel

Hazel was a college freshman who was enrolled in the Japanese language program at a large public university. She had been learning Japanese since junior high school. Her college major was linguistics, and she had general interests in learning foreign languages. In addition to Japanese, she had learned Chinese and had some exposure to Spanish in informal contexts. She was not a big fan of novels, but still she said that she liked reading.

Hazel originally started learning Japanese due to interests in anime. However, as she continued to learn Japanese, her chief interests changed from popular cultural aspects to more of the linguistic aspects of the Japanese language (although she still enjoyed playing games). Her current proficiency level was intermediate. Her study plan was to continue to take classes at her college, study abroad in Japan, and brush up on her Japanese as much as possible, to achieve her ultimate goal: to get a job at Nintendo U.S., a Japanese game company, as a translator/localizer. In order to reach this goal, she believed self-learning was very important. She was excited to participate in the study, as she could have more opportunities to learn Japanese.

Henry

Henry was 50 years old and worked for a company as a software developer. He was a heritage Japanese learner whose parents were both from Japan. However, his parents did not speak Japanese to him when he was young, as they were encouraged not to by his elementary school teacher. Before that, they spoke Japanese to Henry, although he could not recall them doing so. Besides Japanese, he had learned French. He liked reading history, news, and biography.

Henry started learning Japanese formally in college and had been continuing to learn Japanese by himself. He also took some community classes three years before the

study; however, due to his busy work schedule, he could not return after two semesters of the classes. At the time of participation in the study, he was attempting to maintain his Japanese proficiency mainly through reading and watching TV but was not actively studying the language. His plan was to increase overall fluency, but because he is aware of his weakness in kanji, he wanted to focus on kanji while continuing to read and watch TV. His ultimate goal was to live in Japan in the near future.

INSTRUMENTS

Several instruments were used to collect data. Specifically, they consisted of: an online survey, two in-person interviews, two observations, JFL learners' own learning materials, journal entries, and reading materials. Below are the descriptions of each instrument.

Online Survey

The participants were asked to fill out a short online survey prior to the first in-person meeting. The survey was created using Google Forms and consisted of ten questions that asked about participants' background information (See Appendix A). The survey data were used to modify and expand interview questions to customize them for each participant.

Interview

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted per participant (See Appendix B for details). The first interview took approximately an hour on average. The second interview took about 40 minutes on average. The first interview was conducted at the beginning of the participant's reading project. The main purpose of the first interview

was to investigate how the participant had been learning Japanese, how confident he/she was in SDL, how reading was incorporated in his/her learning, and how technology was involved in learning Japanese.

The second interview took place about four weeks after the first interview. The focus of the second interview was the reading project in which participants had been involved during the previous four weeks (or more). Further, participants were asked about a change in technology use, if any. The base questions were modified and expanded accordingly based on participants' journal entries.

Both interviews took place in cafes where participants agreed to meet. All interviews were recorded with a microphone attached to my laptop. The collected interview data were transcribed for data analysis.

JFL Learners' Own Learning Materials

Participants were asked to bring the learning materials that they had been using to learn Japanese to their first interview. They were asked to explain what these materials were, and how they were being used in learning Japanese. These materials were used to identify participants' proficiency levels. They were also used as stimuli to deepen and enrich the interviews.

Observation

Following the interviews, ten to fifteen-minute observations were conducted to examine how the participants usually approached self-directed study of Japanese. All observations were recorded with a microphone attached to my laptop. During the observations, the participants were asked to think-aloud so that I could access what they were thinking about during self-directed study. Think-aloud is a technique to collect data. With think-aloud, participants engage in some sort of problem-solving task. While

engaging in the task, they are asked to verbalize what is going on in their mind (Mackey & Gass, 2005). In using think-aloud, I hoped to access participants' internal dialogue while reading in and learning Japanese.

I adopted the think-aloud protocol, as interviews and journal entries (described below) are not sufficient for capturing participants' learning experiences. Both interviews and journal entries are retrospective verbalization (Yoshida, 2008). Participants may write journal entries right after, or some time after, the learning session. Hence, they are reflective and do not necessarily contain what participants were actually thinking, which could be different from their reflections in their journal entries. Data collected from the think-aloud protocol could enrich my available avenues to address my research questions.

Journal

During the four-week reading project, the participants were asked to keep a journal in English at least once a week (See Appendix C for journal instructions). The purpose of the journal was to provide the participants with opportunities to reflect on their learning in a timely manner. Hence, if the participant engaged in learning once every other day, then s/he was asked to write journal entries once every other day. If they did not study for some reason (e.g., busy schedule), then they were asked to write a short paragraph about why they could not engage in the Japanese language during that week and how they felt about it. In the journal entries, the participants wrote about their learning experience by recording what they did, the challenges they faced, and their feelings about their learning. I asked participants to send their journal entries to me. I then read the journal entries before the second interview to expand the original interview questions.

Reading Materials

The participants were asked to read two types of materials during their four weeks of involvement. The first kind was paper-based readings. These consisted of three subsets of paper-based materials: (1) Japanese graded readers, (2) authentic books, and (3) L2 reading textbooks. The second type was electronic readings.

Japanese Graded Readers

As of early 2016, two series of Japanese graded readers had been published by NPO Tadoku Supporters. One series (Nihongo Tadoku Books) had 42 books in total. The other series (Nihongo Yomuyomu Bunko) had produced 14 box sets of graded readers. Each box set contained five books except for Level 0, which had six books. The topics of the books varied, ranging from original stories to folktales to biography to culture. All the books in both series were categorized in six levels based on length and number of unique words. Level 0 was a novice level that covered 350 distinct words. Each book in this level had up to 400 characters. Level 1 was a beginner level that also covered 350 distinct words, but the books in this level were longer than Level 0 books, ranging from 400 to 1,500 characters. Level 2 books were written for upper-beginner level learners and had 500 distinct words. Each book in this level had from 1,500 to 2,500 characters. Level 3 books were written for lower-intermediate level learners. They covered 800 distinct words, and each book had 2,500 to 5,000 characters. Level 4 books were intermediate level books that covered 1,300 different vocabulary items. Each book in this level ranged from 5,000 to 10,000 characters. Finally, Level 5 books were written for upper-intermediate level learners and covered 2,000 unique vocabulary items. Books in this level had 8,000-20,000 characters. Each level also covered different levels of grammar. For example, the first two levels only used present and past tense, and they were written with polite forms. Moreover, all the kanji and katakana characters in these graded readers

had phonetic guides in hiragana. Additionally, Nihongo Tadoku Books had mp3 audio that could be downloaded from the NPO Tadoku Supporters' website. Nihongo Yomuyomu Bunko, on the other hand, had a CD in each box.

All of the Nihongo Tadoku Books were used in this study. However, due to limited availability, this study used only one box from each level published by Nihongo Yomuyomu Bunko.

Level	Word Level	Total # of Characters	# of books (Tadoku)	# of books (Yomuyomu)
0	350	- 400	3	18
1	350	400 - 1500	5	15
2	500	1500 - 2500	13	15
3	800	2500 - 5000	9	15
4	1300	5000 - 10000	10	10
5	2000	8000 - 20000	2	-

Table 1: Graded Readers Level and Words.

Authentic Books

Another kind of reading material was authentic books. Authentic readings are defined as "unedited, unsimplified materials written for a native target language population" (Young, 1993, p. 3). Authentic readings are widely used in L2 readings classes. As Young's (1993) research suggested, L2 readers can benefit from reading authentic texts more than reading simplified texts. Young explained that simplified texts include features such as bold headings, subheadings, pictures, and obvious rhetorical devices that authentic texts lack. Being able to read authentic texts is also a goal for many

L2 educators as well as learners. Although being able to read authentic readings was not necessarily a goal of my participants, I incorporated some of them to provide a wider selection of reading resources. Particularly, adding several manga books could catch some participants' attention.

I specifically selected authentic books recommended by NPO Tadoku Supporters for L2 extensive reading on their website. Generally, these were children's books, books written for elementary-middle school students, learning magazines for elementary-middle school students, some manga, and manga essays with many illustrations. NPO Tadoku Supporters noted that although many children's books are rather difficult for foreigners, there are books that adult JFL learners can enjoy. NPO Tadoku Supporters claimed that the readings for JFL learners must have phonetic guides to kanji. This organization also provides a list of specific books for native speakers that are appropriate for JFL learners. I selected three to four books for each level aligned with the graded readers (See Appendix D for the book list and Appendix E for a sample book layout). Most books up to Level 3 are children's books, whereas there are more varied genres from Level 4 and above, including manga and essays.

L2 Reading textbooks

The third type of reading material was textbooks published specifically for L2 Japanese reading. In this study, *Read Japanese Culture* and *Fun Reading 55* were used. *Read Japanese Culture* consists of three books divided by proficiency levels (elementary to low-intermediate, high-intermediate to advanced, and advanced). Each book contains several different readings selected from famous Japanese novels and poems. Fun Reading 55 is targeted to elementary to low-intermediate learners. The reading topics center on introducing Japanese culture.

Electronic Readings

For this type of reading, *NHK NEWSWeb EASY* (http://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/easy/) was used. *NHK NEWSWeb EASY* is a website developed by NHK (national broadcasting company in Japan) that introduces news articles in plain Japanese. NHK claims that these articles are mainly for elementary to middle school students as well as foreigners living in Japan. Each weekday, NHK updates five news articles on the website. The five daily articles are usually about timely news, culture, and internationally related topics. For example, the news on March 10, 2015 mainly focused on the topics related to the fourth anniversary of the northeast Japan earthquake that happened on March 11, 2011. Some news articles also report about America, such as a story about the U.S. ambassador to Japan who enjoyed plum flowers or the U.S. ambassador to Korea who was attacked by a Korean radical activist. The website retains news for up to one month and deletes older news. Each news article has glosses for underlined words (glosses pop up when hovered over) (See Appendix E for a sample article layout).

Because the news is meant for young native speakers as well as foreigners with various language backgrounds, the glosses are written in Japanese. All the kanji words have phonetic guides in hiragana, but katakana words do not have phonetic guides. The website gives a warning at the bottom of the page that not all browsers support the phonetic guides. The site also has a function that changes the colors of certain words (e.g., a proper name, geographical location) so that readers do not try to search for a word that they cannot find in a dictionary. Further, all the articles have audio attached to the page. However, because the scripts are recorded by a machine, the audio does not sound very natural. Additionally, most of the articles have videos. These video clips were actually aired on television for Japanese audiences in NHK's news programs. Hence,

although authentic, they may be too difficult for JFL learners. Each article also has a link to the original article that was written for adult Japanese readers. However, again, because the original article was written for adult native Japanese readers, it does not have phonetic guides to kanji words. For samples of reading materials, see Appendix E.

PROCEDURE

After I obtained an initial agreement about participation in this study, the approved consent form, an online survey, and a reading list were sent to the participants via e-mail. By filling out the online survey, the participants expressed that they agreed to participate in the present study. The participants were also asked to bring their learning materials or take pictures of the materials.

Next, the participants and I set up a time and place for the first interview. Typically, I met the participants on weekends at local cafes. After the first interview, I conducted an observation session. The participants used learning materials of their choice for this observation. After the observation, I provided the readings that the participant had requested and suggested some other materials to take home. I also instructed participants on how to use the *NHK NEWSWeb* page. When providing the reading materials, I explained the general rules about pleasure/extensive reading (e.g., try not to use a dictionary, read for overall meaning), as extensive reading is likely effective only when it is appropriately instructed (Scammacca, et al., 2007). Next, I explained what to include in journal entries, how often the participants would need to write, and the acceptable forms of journal entries by showing them an example (See Appendix F for the diary instructions).

In the subsequent four weeks (or more), the participants engaged in their regular SDL, writing journal entries, and reading the provided materials if they wished. During these four or more weeks, the participants could contact me at any time to ask for clarification about research procedures. They could also ask for additional reading materials. At the same time, I contacted the participants on a weekly basis. If participants had not written journal entries that week, I sent a reminder e-mail. Additionally, if journal entries needed clarification, I sent follow-up e-mails to the participants.

At the end of the fourth week, I met the participants again and had another interview about the learning experience during the past four (or more) weeks. In the observation, which followed the interview, the participants were asked to perform a think-aloud task with one of the readings for their level.

Data were collected in parallel for up to two participants at a time. In particular, I assigned two participants with different proficiency levels to a single data-collection time period. In doing so, the participants were most likely guaranteed to have access to most of the reading materials that they had selected.

SUMMARY OF METHOD AND DATA ANALYSIS

In summary, in the present study, I adopted the case-study method due to the limited number of participants as well as their varied backgrounds. In conducting a case study, I utilized several data collection tools to triangulate data—namely, an online survey, two interviews, two observations, journal entries, participants' learning materials, and ER materials.

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. For each participant, after I conducted the first interview and observation data, I put these audio

data in the participant's folder on my computer. Next, I transcribed the first interview. After I finished transcribing, I then applied the open-coding method to the transcription. Burnard (1991) explained that, instead of using predetermined categories, they should be generalized freely. As participants' backgrounds varied, the participants were unlikely to use similar keywords or approach the same topic in the same ways. Thus, in contrast to predetermined categories, open-coding would not restrict how I could analyze the data.

Specifically in my research, I read the transcription thoroughly from the beginning to the end. While reading, I underlined whatever looked important and/or interesting for my research. I also highlighted the parts that were related specifically to my research questions, namely, motivation / feeling, technology, and reading (selective coding). While doing so, I also added memos to record my thoughts about underlined / highlighted portions of the transcription. Finally, I read the transcriptions from the beginning to the end again along with the highlighted / underlined portions as well as my memos to improve and verify my interpretations of the transcription. In the meantime, if any question about the interview arose, I contacted the participant for clarification.

Subsequently, I followed the same procedure for the second set of interviews. However, unlike the first set of interviews, there was some time lag between the time of the second interview conducted and the time I started transcribing.

Additionally, I also followed the same procedure for journal entries, except that the data were already typed. I simply collected and sorted journal entries participant by participant and started reading and coding. Most journal entries were read and coded prior to the second interviews, so that I could expand the second interviews.

With respect to the learning observation data, I listened to the audio files. Instead of transcribing the entire observation session, I summarized what the participants did during the session. Then, I focused on what was relevant to my research questions (i.e.,

technology, reading, motivation, and feeling) as well as strategies used during the observation sessions for further analysis.

Validity and reliability are two important elements for more credible studies. Validity (i.e., whether or not the data collection tool truly measures what it is intended to measure) and reliability (i.e., whether or not the results of a study can be seen again in a similar setting) are discussed mainly in quantitative research. Golafshani (2003) argued that reliability as traditionally defined is not relevant to qualitative research, but it is rather the dependability and trustworthiness of a study that is important. As mentioned above, to increase validity and reliability, I adopted triangulation to collect data. In addition to triangulation, I constantly communicated with my supervisor to discuss how to analyze the collected data. Further, I also contacted the participants during the data-analysis phase in order to obtain their input on whether I had accurately interpreted and represented the collected data.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter summarizes the collected data for each participant from three perspectives: (1) SDL, (2) reading project and (3) learning observation. In the SDL section, how each participant approached his/her learning of Japanese, including his/her feelings towards learning Japanese in an SDL context, is described. Most of the data for this section were drawn from the first interview, unless otherwise noted. In the reading project section, the results of the reading project are reported. The data were collected from participants' journal entries as well as from the second interview. Lastly, the learning observation section summarizes how each participant approached Japanese materials and reading. The data were taken from the two observations conducted after the interviews.

Next, overall tendencies from the above three aspects are reported. Even though each participant had a different background, there were several common aspects found, including what type of reading materials participants preferred and the use of audio.

RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL CASES

Courtney

Courtney's SDL

As Courtney had been taking Japanese classes, she reported that her main Japanese study was via Japanese classes. Most of her study time was spent working on homework assignments. When she had trouble with assignments or content during class, she sought external help, such as visiting her instructor during office hours and posing questions to her former tutor. In other words, outside of her obligatory study time for

Japanese, she relied mostly on social strategies, such as asking native speakers. As she pointed out, she tried to find answers herself when she started the first semester. However, she was struggling so much that she realized that it was so much easier and faster to ask her teacher.

In Courtney's case, both reading and technology played roles in her learning to some extent. Prior to taking a Japanese class, she started learning Japanese on her own for a few months. During these months, she used free apps to learn hiragana. However, once she started taking a class, she stopped learning with apps, as learning hiranaga became irrelevant to her level. Beyond the hiragana learning, she did not seek more opportunities to read by herself. The reason for not seeking these opportunities is largely because she did not have time to work on extra reading during semester. However, it was also because of the difficulty of kanji characters as well as her lack of knowledge about Japanese culture. She remarked about kanji in the interview:

> I think it's challenging to me when I see kanji I don't know because, then I feel like I'm, I get worried because "oh no, I don't know what it means" and it's hard to guess what it means and I'm missing a big part of it, so I think that sways me from trying.

Courtney also mentioned that it is difficult to find Japanese children's books to read in the U.S. despite her interests and belief that children's books would help her learn a foreign language:

> Actually, I really wished that, I was really excited about your study because of the book opportunity because I have asked like, several people that I know who are Japanese, or Chinese who speaks Japanese, um, who have children like, "could you tell me the titles of the books you read to kids, so that I could read them, too?" But none have followed up very actively with me because you're in the States you know, Dr. Seuss and Madeline and these different books I know right away when I'm in the library or bookstore which ones are very popular. Everyone knows how to read them. And that's what I would encourage an English language learner to start reading. Like, let's go to Barnes & Noble and find these three

> books are really popular. Let's try to read them! Um, but I wish, it's harder to find what books are popular in Japan 'cause I don't understand the culture.

Courtney remarked that, even though she believed that children's books would help her friends' English learning, she had not witnessed the effects, as her foreign friends did not try to read children's books. Nonetheless, she had a positive attitude towards the present pleasure reading project that she was about to start.

In addition to the use of the app for kana learning prior to taking a Japanese class, Courtney utilized technology in both formal and SDL contexts. For her formal learning, some of her assignments were online. Moreover, she checked what was assigned for homework and checked her grade and quiz scores to make sure she was on track through her university's course management system. When she did not know the meaning of a word, she would consult with a dictionary website called Tangorin. Additionally, she would send text messages with Japanese words in Japanese/English to her classmate to test each other. However, she was not fully sure how to type in Japanese on her phone. In SDL, in addition to the app, she used a social media site to meet a local friend who speaks Japanese well. Although she did not use any other technology besides Tangorin after she started taking Japanese classes, she mentioned her interests in technology in the interview:

> I would like if there are, if I could find something, I've heard friends talk about using, like, going through a program or something whether there is a Japanese student in Japan who's learning English and then you're learning Japanese and you talk maybe an hour. In 30 minutes we talk in English and 30 minutes in Japanese. I would really like to do that. Haven't found one yet.

Courtney had heard about online language exchanges from friends and became interested in them. She also displayed interest in listening to Japanese music via the Internet; however, she simply did not know how to access what is popular in Japan. In Courtney's case, technology was key to accessing Japanese learning resources.

Based on her comments, her learning strategies for, and her descriptions of other foreign-language study experiences (i.e., she liked the immersion setting and disliked an isolated online Spanish class), it was rather apparent that she preferred and relied on social strategies, such as asking friends and seeking opportunities to meet native speakers. However, due to her busy schedule, she had been unable to practice her social strategies as much as she wished.

Additionally, she seemed to be well aware of what she was doing during SDL or in class. She mentioned several experiences that are related to metacognitive strategies. For example, she called herself an audio learner and believed that listening would work more than writing. She also remembered that her past study abroad experience in Switzerland was successful, so she wanted to replicate the same experience for her Japanese learning. Her huge reliance on social strategies seemed to come about based on metacognitive self-assessments. Since she knew she would not be able to figure out the answers by herself, she decided to ask more knowledgeable others. Lastly, when she encountered a difficulty while learning, she would try to encourage herself by reflecting on past successful experiences. Thus, even though she was struggling with her Japanese learning, it did not mean that she was not a self-regulated learner.

With respect to confidence, Courtney noted that she was not confident to learn Japanese on her own. She had already been aware of how much she could do and how much she could not by herself in learning Japanese. Hence, she knew she would need support. She also noted that she preferred a structured environment, like classroom settings. On her own, she did not know how to learn Japanese in a structured way.

> As of right now, once I graduate, it will be difficult to continue to study in a structured environment. I will try to continue, hopefully, like, join a meet-up, like Group Me or something that gets together to study. Um, but it will probably slow

> down once I graduate. I would still try a little bit, at least to keep what I know fresh.

Courtney thought she would continue her study with other people once she graduated. She did not sound very positive about her future plans, although she said that she would try. Due to the fact that she was not sure where she would end up after graduation at this moment, she sounded a little cautious. It might also be because she did not have much successful experience in self-directed Japanese learning yet.

Courtney's Reading Project

During the four-week reading project, Courtney read five books in total. Due to her beginning proficiency level, I only provided her with Level 0 and 1 books (about 15 books in total). Hence, she read about 30% of what was provided. She did not read any of the online articles. She read one book per week, spending between 15 minutes to 45 minutes on weekends during these weeks. She read them mostly at her boyfriend's home. She occasionally read them aloud to her boyfriend even though he did not understand Japanese.

The five books she read were: *Tabeta no Daare*, *Kudamono*, *Onigiri*, *Yasai no Onaka*, and *Ari to Kirigirisu*. The first four books are children's books, while the last one is a graded reader. For the graded reader, Courtney did not use audio to read it. She chose to read children's books by herself. She said that she picked up these books first because they were more colorful than the other books. These four children's books coincidentally are about food, but she did not select these books based on the topic. She also did not care about the difference in level. She simply started with what she liked and did not check if the book was Level 0 or 1.

When Courtney read the books, she did not look up any words. She simply tried to guess the meanings from the context or illustrations. In the interview, she recalled that

she sometimes read the sentences aloud to her boyfriend and told him what she thought they might mean. Although there were no other specific strategies mentioned while reading, she evaluated the graded reader that she read. She said that reading the graded readers with a partner would be more beneficial. This indicates that she was monitoring and reflecting on her reading experience, along with writing the journal entries for this reading project.

Courtney enjoyed reading children's books. She liked the fact that she could apply what she learned in class to a real life context and feel no pressure to read the books because it was not a required assignment and the reading length was short. She commented:

> Um.. it helped me to take Japanese learning and apply it to real life, and not just in the classroom. And I could read this little story and think that…. this is um… it's not like being tested and I could think about what A-sensei or what, what we were learning and see if I can find it in the reading 'cause I know it's not. I guess knowing that it is not connected to my Japanese learning, makes me feel no pressure to find certain things, but when I do find them, I know it's by my own effort, which means I'm really learning something and that's encouraging.

On the other hand, I recommended that Courtney read a graded reader towards the end of the four weeks, so she picked *Ari to Kirigirisu*. She said that she still like the reading; however, even though she admitted that the grammar was more aligned with what she learned in class, she preferred children's books to the graded reader. She said the main reason was because she could not understand about 20% of the reading. Because there were more sentences per page compared to the children's books that she had read, she could not guess the words that she did not know well. She also had several words that she did not understand just by reading the sentences in the children's books. However, she still could guess them better, and she understood about 95% of the content. In her journal entries, she noted that guessing was "frustrating." Nonetheless, she was glad that

she did the reading project in her second semester, as she would have not understood the content and gotten confused if it had occurred in the previous semester.

Although Courtney believed that she had understood children's books better, her journal entry suggests that she encountered problems when reading children's books. In the first journal entry, she wrote:

> While reading this book, it took me several pages to realize that the pictures on the right page were multiplying. 2 elephants, 3 lions, 4 cows. Each page has a picture of something new, an ice cream cone, sandwich, cherries, and then the phrase: たべたのだあれ [Tabeta no Daare? (Who ate it?)].
>
> I don't really know what that means, but I know the first part means to eat. Maybe they are saying that the picture corresponds to the other picture (eggs to cows) like they are the same colors. OHH as I'm writing this I realized that the picture on the left is hidden on the right page. The eggs are spots on one cow, the cherry is on the end of an elephant[']s tail. It took me awhile to understand that. When I first started writing, I was a little confused and frustrated because I can understand one word but don't understand what the overall book is trying to tell me. But then as I am processing my thoughts in this journal I realized what the author intended. After this, I feel proud of myself and finish with a smile because I feel accomplished that I was able to figure that out. I'd still like to know what the other half of the sentence means: だあれ[daare (who)]。But as I'm thinking, maybe it means look and find or something similar.

While Courtney could not guess the meaning of the word "だあれ (daare)" (who), she could almost do so correctly as shown in her journal entry. Even though it is not exactly correct, it would not affect her overall comprehension of the book. Yet, she identified the problem was that she could not understand the word simply by looking at it. She learned the vocabulary in Japanese class as "だれ (dare)," and the word "だあれ (daare)" is the same word with emphasis by making the vowel longer. If there was audio, she might have understood the word correctly but not by reading the text alone. Such a small variation in a word that does not bother native speakers still may confuse L2 Japanese learners, and there are often such variations in children's books.

As mentioned above, Courtney did not use audio to read *Ari to Kirigirisu* nor did she read any online articles. She said in the interview that she forgot about these. Although she added that she wished that she could read online articles, she did not appear to be highly motivated to read them.

Although reading children's books as well as a graded reader gave Courtney more confidence in reading, it is still unclear to what extent she was positively affected by the reading project. In her journal entries, she used positive emotion words such as "encouraging" and "feel proud of myself" several times. She also asked if the school library had any Japanese books. Further, she also said in the second interview that she would want to try to study individually a little bit in addition to joining a meet-up after finishing her college. Yet, when I asked how she would learn Japanese by herself, she did not volunteer reading children's books or graded readers as shown in the excerpt below:

> R: Okay. And do you think like, afterwards, after you finish Japanese, you said, in the previous interview, that, you may not be able to continue studying Japanese if not having a meetup or something, then do you think that you can continue studying Japanese with the books if you have them.
>
> C: Yeah. I think that I will … like,… after [the last required class] you mean?
>
> R: Ah, yeah, even after graduating from college or just long term.
>
> C: College…. I will, yeah, I will keep my *Yookoso* books, I think. And then.. um, I will try to study a little independently. I think I would like to… also like.. do uh, meetup that meets outside and do like conversation and maybe doing some type of… like, less formal class, yeah.
>
> R: Oh. So you don't wanna buy some children's books while you're in Japan?
>
> C: I think I will, yeah. I think I will also… I wanna learn how to read Japanese magazines.
>
> R: Ah, okay.

Courtney only said that she would buy children's books for her Japanese learning after I specifically asked. Thus, after the reading project, Courtney's excitement about reading Japanese books decreased a little compared to the initial excitement, as she did not volitionally mention her plan to purchase children's books in Japan.

Courtney's Learning Observation

In the first observation session, Courtney reviewed kanji with an online study tool (flashcards) for an upcoming kanji quiz for her class. She went over a set of online flashcards twice, the first time, just going through and the second time, she hid partial information with her fingers to see if she could read the kanji words correctly.

From this observation, it appeared that she incorporated several strategies to learn kanji. She occasionally used a mnemonic method. For example, she remembered the kanji for rain and high because they looked like raining falling from the sky and a tall house. For other kanji where she could not easily use a mnemonic, however, she was having difficulty remembering them. She also mentioned that she would need to write down the kanji that she was not confident with (rote learning). When a kanji word came up (two or more kanji letters constructing a word), she tried to guess the meaning of each kanji to make sense of them, although she was usually not successful. Lastly, she used okurigana (part of inflection) as a clue to guess the pronunciation of the same kanji. For example, she differentiated "sukunai" from "sukoshi" with the okurigana "nai" and "shi."

There were several challenging points in learning kanji for her with her learning tool. First, she had trouble learning the kanji characters for "north," "south," "east," and "west" because they were similar in meaning. She was also having a little problem with the website tool; she was not sure what the semi-colon mark between two Japanese readings for the same kanji word mean. As a result, she could not fully understand the

kanji word (昨日: kinoo (yesterday)). Besides, she thought that the English misspelling was distracting. She struggled with several characters because of kanji characters themselves and learning a similar meaning at the same time.

In the second observation, I asked Courtney to read an online article from NHK EasyWeb. The article was about an improved Toyota Prius coming to the market. When Courtney looked at the article, she noticed that there were several katakana words in it, so she commented that she was not confident with reading katakana as much as reading hiragana. She read the article just once. She read the Japanese sentence first and then translated into English. When the sentence was longer, she would pause at the end of a clause or a phrase and translate it. When she read aloud, she read all the numbers in English rather than in Japanese. As the article was a little long for her, she skipped some parts; however, she kept reading to the end of the article without stopping to look up words. She simply guessed the meanings of some unfamiliar words and moved on even though she was not confident with her guesses. When she finished reading the article, she summarized the entire article in English. In summarizing, she tried to guess the meaning of the kanji word that she did not know based on the kanji meaning of one of the kanji characters in the word.

Courtney thought that reading the article was harder than reading books that she had read since there was no picture that would help her understand the meaning. However, because the article was simplified, she could still understand the overall meaning based on what she did comprehend and guessing some kanji meanings. She mentioned that she would understand more if she listened to the audio. Since Courtney mentioned the audio, I asked her to listen to it.

Listening to the audio actually helped Courtney understand more of the content. She could figure out the words “haiburiddo” (hybrid) and “Puriusu” (Prius), which were

written in katakana. When she listened to the audio, she paused it occasionally to catch up, so that she could understand more. Next, she watched the video at my suggestion. Although the video was made for native speakers, it helped her guess and understand more. Again, she paused the video several times to interpret the content better. After listening to the audio and watching the video, she thought that stopping the audio and going slowly would help her understand more.

Grace

Grace's SDL

Despite her wishes, Grace's SDL of Japanese was not consistent due to her work and her family. She has been working with Japanese tutors to learn Japanese for several years after she moved to the U.S. She did not think about taking a Japanese class at a community college or a community class partially because of her unique proficiency level.

> I think the problem is that…. I know, because having lived in Japan and studied Japanese as much as I did, classes, a class that's right for my level is really hard to find, and you go to the [community college] classes and you look at the schedule, a lot of it is beginner. Maybe beginner up to like low-intermediate if you are lucky and not so much with the Japanese. It tends to be just beginner. Um,… and then……so I don't know that I can find the class that's gonna support me at a… kind of mixed level I'm at, where you want to keep up a lot of reading, writing, listening… and also speaking. Right? Because a lot of those classes I'm not going to repeat all who are speaking, so one of the valuable things to me working with you and, and K-san, and, and E-chan was you're, you're talking to me about anything under the sun and it helps. You know, you're, I'm modeling what you bring to me, same way I'm modeled that language in, in Japan and in office, you know, you're telling it to me; it gives me more assurance that it's right . Another foreigner telling it to me, I'm like "ehhhh". I'm not so sure.

Grace felt that it would be a waste of time to work with another student who was not a native speaker of Japanese, as this person's command of the language would not be

necessarily trustworthy. Since the time that she could spend on Japanese learning was limited, she would want to spend it on a better learning experience. She thought that it was her responsibility as an adult learner to make sure that the quality of teaching / learning she was getting was high, not simply following whatever teachers or textbooks told her to do.

With respect to tutoring sessions, she usually met her tutor once per week for two hours. However, she occasionally needed to cancel her tutoring sessions, as she had to work or attend events. She thought that she would need to work for 3-5 hours on her own in order to maintain her Japanese level, which was suggested by one of her friends who can speak several languages fluently. She said that she had been able to do it up until a year ago, spending hours to prepare for her tutoring sessions. After she changed jobs, she became so busy that she could not find much time to prepare for tutoring sessions any more. Although she said that she wished she had more time to work on her studies, she accepted the situation, saying:

> It is called a life with a husband and a child. Haha. And job. Um, the real challenge is finding time. … Now, you know, I, I do not have time during the week any more, and weekend is pretty overloaded, at the moment. And I'm lucky enough of course to have a husband who does a lot but there is only so much he can do to just kind of let me have all the time in the world to do stuff, so… Life.

When Grace did have time, she previewed her textbook(s) with her tutor. At the time of the first interview, she was working on a textbook for reviewing elementary-level grammar. She selected this particular textbook, as it was recommended by her former Japanese teacher in Japan. When she visited Japan a few years ago to attend her former tutor's wedding, she purchased several textbooks to bring back to the U.S. She also commented that she liked to work on textbooks because they provide structured learning.

On the other hand, she also liked an immersion environment when she studied Spanish in Spain, which gave her the courage to go to Japan without knowing any of the language.

Additionally, she listened to a podcast called JapanesePodcast101 during her commutes. In the past when she had time, she would download the texts of the podcast and read them. She would also use the texts for her tutoring lessons. She said that she liked this podcast because it appeared to be made by professionals or at least people who take Japanese language learning/teaching seriously. Previously, she tried to find an app to learn Japanese, but what she could find was only basic and not well thought out. She commented on how she liked JapanesePodcast101 versus other smartphone apps:

> I don't wanna try any beta stuff unless it's really good. And if it's been recommended to me, but generally I'm looking for something that's pretty stable and pretty… so here's the problem. Um, so this is why I do like Japanese 101 dot com. They have a lot of material which clearly has been very thoughtfully put together and done from a perspective of a serious student. I think a lot of stuff I was finding a couple of years back was geared to like, we're going to Japan for holiday. There's need to know basic or the, the very beginner learners. You know, it eats up, it eats up space on your phone. You know, not really…. So how do I find something robust enough for a serious student? That's my challenge.

Grace did not want to invest time and effort in something that may not be worth doing. As she was searching for apps for her learning, all the apps she found were for beginners and provided limited content. She did not mind, on the other hand, investing some money on high-quality learning materials and resources such as private tutoring and podcasts with fees. Even though JapanesePodcast101 is a paid service, she would continue to invest in it due to its high quality.

With respect to reading, she did not really read beyond the textbook scripts. She admitted that the amount of reading she had been doing was not sufficient to maintain her proficiency level. She occasionally tried to read Facebook posts from her Japanese friends as well. She also read online articles about Japan in English but only by following

the links on the other news article pages that caught her attention. She stated she would not try authentic readings due to her lack of knowledge of kanji. When she did not understand the meaning of a word, she would use an electronic dictionary that she bought in Japan.

With respect to additional technology use, although she was open to any suggestions, she did not use or try to explore anything beyond what she knew right now. She also was aware of online tutoring opportunities or online pen pals, etc.; however, she did not want to try these out. She commented:

> The problem in that, though, is…um, … I know that you have experience with this…… um… you know, it's, you know, working remotely and particularly if you never met the person face to face can be really really um, hard to build a rapport or to you know really get a sense of the person. Um, and uh, there is always this delay built into technology. You know, we talk and it takes longer time to go through the system or doesn't echo, um. For example, when K-san was doing her research and spent time, you know, in uh, Ecuador, we did a lot of stuff by Skype. And the only reason that it worked is because we knew each other, so she, she knew me, she knew my strengths and weaknesses, so, so, you know, we would battle planes taking off, slow internet connections, haven't turned off the video, um, dogs barking, all sorts of interruptions but because we had the base, you know, it was easy to work through that, and you know, that's life. So I hope that I don't have to go into more in personal relationship, but certainly if I had to because I couldn't find somebody to help me here. I agree with you that technology makes that possible that I should be able to … you know, with some searching find a good tutor, but there is no replacement for in-person learning and interaction.

Grace wanted to build a trusting relationship between her peer / tutor and herself, so that she would be able to learn better. Despite her comment on the role of technology being important, she was also well aware of its limitation. For her, it would be difficult to build a good relationship online alone. She believed that in-person interactions were more valuable for her learning than online interactions.

Moreover, Grace commented on the challenges of learning Japanese by herself:

> I think the problem with uh studying on your own is, dictionary do not understand context, right? … So sometimes I don't know that the word is actually a part of a set phrase and sometimes if you don't have, uh, any clue what the kanji is, if you don't have an accompanying guide which gives you any sense of the phonetic structure. You can spend a lot of time looking, you can eat up a lot of time just looking for that one kanji. What does this kanji mean? What is this block of kanji, which is a set phrase or something actually, what does it actually mean? And of course, how does it, how do you pronounce it because then kanji changes according to contexts, right? So the problem is, sometimes you don't know if you are right. You're super convinced from your dictionary that your translation is correct and you come to a lesson and you say, actually Grace, it's blah, blah, blah, and that changes the meaning. So you know it's not that the dog ate the homework, but you know that the typhoon blew over the house. So it's like, REALLY?! So the problem with learning on your, your own with something like Japanese is there is a lot I don't know and there is a lot that is very contextual and you can be… co… you can be very strong in conviction that it's right and it's absolutely wrong. So then you put that in your brain, and it's hard to undo sometimes.

Grace felt that it could be a waste of time to figure out words/phrases that could easily be explained by native speakers. Many kanji/words/phrases can mean different things depending on context, and Grace felt she might not be able to get them correct even after spending hours on them. As she knew that she would not be able to work entirely on her own and that it would be beneficial to get support from native speakers, she was not very confident to do SDL on her own. In this regard, Grace was like Courtney. Grace also relied on social strategies extensively. She also adopted metacognitive strategies consciously or unconsciously. For instance, during the first interview, she compared her ideal situation of language learning and her current learning state several times, indicating that she was monitoring her overall progress. She also knew what worked better for her language learning (e.g., treating language like music, help from native speakers, etc.).

About participating in this reading project, Grace displayed her interest and excitement. She admitted that her weakest skillsets were reading and writing. Hence,

being able to work on reading would be beneficial for her. Unlike Courtney, Grace did not necessarily have a special belief about using authentic books for learning foreign languages.

Grace's Reading Project

Grace had about four weeks to read the books that I provided her, but she kept them a week before she started reading due to her busy work schedule. Because the four-week period of her reading project overlapped with Courtney's, I gave Grace all the books except for the ones that Courtney received. She read a few sections of *My Darling is a Foreigner*, which is a Level 4 book but has English translation underneath the Japanese texts. She also read a NHK EasyWeb article about an izakaya (Japanese-style bar). However, the last two weeks of the reading project, she did not have any time to read the books or online articles due to her busy work schedule. Yet, she still continued what she had been doing: JapanesePodcast101 throughout the four-week project time. In the second interview, she also mentioned that she ended up reading a little bit of text on the podcast website, as she found that the site updated its available readings.

Grace's selection of the book and online article was somewhat spontaneous. She wrote in her journal how she selected the book:

> As extremely busy week with major projects to deliver at work and preparation of our house for rent. So no time to study during the week. This morning, I sat on the patio and I was drawn to this book by the manga style and the topic. I know at least three international couples like this and so I was curious about what I might learn.. Also, I just liked that the manga was not text heavy and the drawing style is very attractive.

Grace did not check the level of the book when she selected it. She also explained why she picked up the particular NHK news article. She just clicked the link I sent at the time she saw the email from me. Then, she just selected what she thought was most interesting

among the five new articles of the day. More specifically, she particularly selected the izakaya article because it was connected to her past experience in Japan.

In reading the sections of the book she selected, she made photocopies of the book sections that she read, so that she could write notes on them. She enjoyed reading the sections, as she could learn something new about Japanese culture. She even mentioned that she might buy the book later. However, she also wrote in her journal entries that she was not happy that she could not guess about 40% of the kanji correctly. When she found out that she could guess some kanji readings correctly, she felt happy about and proud of it. For the first section, she tried not to use her dictionary during the first reading. For the second section that she read on a different day, she took a different approach: she read a Japanese sentence first and then quickly checked her dictionary to make sure if she was right rather than waiting to finish reading the section. Later, for the second reading, she asked her tutor about the readings and meanings of some of the kanji she could not figure out. In her journal entry, she expressed her frustration and the importance of help from native speakers:

> Today, I chose a short section from the My Darling is a Gaijin book. It's when S-san introduced Tony to her mother and father. I took a different approach this time in that I read the Japanese first and used my dictionary to quickly check to see if my guess at kanji readings was correct. However, I did not use my wand to draw any of the kanji that I did not get right away. I looked at the English simply as a guide and in particular in 5 sections where I did not get most of the kanji on the first pass.
>
> I was pleasantly surprised to see how much kanji I was able to read correctly the first time - about 60% of it. And I enjoyed the story in Japanese. The English is not an exact translation - it is written to be a story on its own. On the second pass, I used my wand to draw some of the kanji to figure out the meaning. This was not helpful as I wanted it to be. I was running out of time and so when I had my tutoring session later that day, I simply asked my teacher to help me with the reading of the kanji I missed - about 30% of it. This was very helpful because there were some set phrases and so studying the kanji individually was not

> helpful. Also, some kanji has contextual or multiple meanings - and so she could explain these types of nuances in meaning to me. For example, the set phrase for a softening attitude. So with this help, I was very satisfied that that I had studied it quite thoroughly.

While Grace was glad that she was correct on about 60% of the kanji at first sight, she was not happy with her ability to draw kanji on her electronic dictionary. She decided to get help from her tutor instead of spending too much time on looking the unfamiliar kanji up in her dictionary. Despite the fact that she was satisfied with her learning experience, it appears that Level 4 books, at least authentic ones, did not match Grace's current proficiency level. Nonetheless, she did not seem to care about whether or not book levels matched her level.

With respect to online article reading, Grace also enjoyed that she could learn some new facts about Japanese culture and that she could connect her past experiences in Japan. She read the article while listening to the audio three times. The audio helped her understand the article better. Although it was read by a machine, she did not seem to care. She only mentioned in her journal entry that she liked that the audio was slow-paced and clearly enunciated every word. She also liked the furigana function above the kanji in the article, so that she could finish reading without looking at her dictionary. With the help of audio and furigana, however, she still could not figure out the two company names mentioned in the article.

Grace also watched the video that accompanied the article, which was made for native speakers and not simplified. She understood about 60% of it by just watching largely because she had already read the simplified version. Moreover, she could finally figure out the company names she did not understand when reading the simplified version. She wrote in her journal entry:

> The actual TV report of the event was also included on the site. I listened/looked at it and found that the pace was much quicker and the Japanese was more

> complex and formal. I understood about 60% of it - in part because I had already studied the article. I was able to see the brand logos and names of the two companies involved and I instantly knew who they were talking about. In particular, just reading the Katakana was not as helpful as seeing the famous logo blue and white logo of the tour/travel company, H.I.S.

By watching the video, even though it was an original video created for native speakers, Grace understood the article better. She also liked the fact that the article was vertically written, which helped her to process the sentence easily. With this experience, she rated online articles as learning materials very high, writing in her journal entry:

> This is a great website for helping me with my reading of Kanji. The article was just the right length and it was good to just concentrate on reading and understanding.

Overall, Grace's evaluation of using readings for Japanese learning was very positive. Also, the overall evaluation on how reading can help her learning and tracking how much she could guess kanji relate to her metacognitive skill use.

Grace was surprised that there were actually a whole lot more materials available out there beyond textbooks than she had thought. After the reading project, Grace wanted to continue to use them for her tutoring sessions with her tutor. She also thought readings absolutely would support her own self-learning. Particularly, she thought that online reading might also change her way of learning. Rather than using pencil and paper, she thought that she might be able to do much more with a computer with the same amount of time. Further, she liked the fact that smaller chunks of reading would work better with her busy life-style.

In contrast, she also mentioned in the second interview that there were several challenges for using reading for learning. First, in her case, the furigana are a little too small. Additionally, furigana are always above kanji, and there is no function to hide them. Grace elaborated on these two issues in the interview:

> G: Yes, the phonetic guidelines were very helpful. The challenge is, and you see me using, my…
>
> R: Yeah, magnifying
>
> G: Yeah, magnifier, yes, is. It's funny, when I turned 40, I'm 46 now, my eyes suddenly got really, really bad. And so that sometimes is, um, challenge, but then .. I think it's good to have the hiragana, next to it, but there's a point which you shouldn't have it. So I think.. right now, as I'm trying to resurrect my, uh, reading, I think having hiragana in the graded readers is very helpful. But eventually I think we need to go back to not having so much and let me figure it out.

Grace listed furigana being too small as well as not having a function to hide them as problematic for her learning. She could not see furigana without her magnifier, which could be bothersome. Additionally, while it is helpful to have furigana for Japanese learners, it is also helpful not to have them for the sake of learning, according to Grace.

With respect to technology use, Grace had not changed any in terms of how she would use it to learn Japanese although she visited the podcast site more often. However, as mentioned above, she now realized that utilizing more technology, such as searching online while reading, might be helpful. Yet, she has not changed her habit. She still sticks to her traditional way: using a pencil and paper, as well as using her dictionary rather than googling kanji.

Grace's Learning Observation

For the first observation, Grace used the grammar textbook that she had been working on with her tutor. She photocopied the sections of the textbook that she would work on for her tutoring session, so that she would be able to write down answers and notes without making a mess with the textbook. The section she worked on was about differences between continuous and instantaneous verbs and how they are used differently in Japanese. Because Grace had been working on this grammar point for a few weeks, she started out by recalling what she had learned on the previous page. She first

read the explanation of the grammar and then moved on to practice by solving problems in the textbook. She read the instructions carefully, even caring about how to pronounce the word "underline" in Japanese. While solving problems, she skipped what she did not understand well and just moved on to the next one. When she solved each problem, she translated the entire sentence into English to make sure it made sense. While she was solving one of the problems, she recalled the content of the podcast she had recently listened to, which was about "-te iku" and "-te kuru."

Throughout the entire problem solving session, she paid careful attention to the tense of the sentences, so that she could answer each problem correctly. After she completed the questions, she went back to the question she skipped and solved it.

There were some strategies and emotions involved during Grace's learning session. First, she guessed from the overall context of the sentence to answer the correct conjugation of the verb in question. She also compared a question to other questions in order to answer it. That is, she realized that she had not used one of the choices of the verb conjugations in the other questions. Hence, she guessed that conjugation should be the answer to the question. She also paid attention to the tense of verbs and particles to answer correctly. Although she did not check her dictionary during this session, she said that she would use her dictionary to check if her understanding was correct before looking at the provided answer, as she would be interested in whether or not she was right. With respect to emotional involvement, she commented that she hated katakana during the session.

During the second learning session, I asked Grace to read a Level 3 graded reader, titled *Chumon no Ooi Ryori-ten* (The Restaurant that Has Many Orders). She first examined the picture on the book cover and then read the title on the cover. Next, she opened the book and started reading the page by examining the picture first. She did not

read extra information on the backside of the cover page. She read a few sentences in Japanese and then translated into English. As she went along, if she felt something sounded strange, she stopped. Also, when she did not understand some words when translating, she tried to guess with the picture as a clue. When she did not understand the word “teppou,” she used her electronic dictionary to look it up. However, it took her three times to reach the correct translation, as she did not spell the word correctly due to small furigana. She made a mistake of recognizing the diacritical mark and did not think that the small “tsu” was actually small. In order to recognize the furigana correctly, she needed to use her magnifier. When an onomatopoeia word appeared, she first tried to mimic the sound and guessed the meaning of the word with the sound that she could potentially associate with it. Then, she tried to double check with her dictionary. Since she could not find the meaning in her dictionary, she just decided that her guess was correct and moved on. When she tried to look up the word “utsu,” she had difficulty in searching for the correct kanji, as there were several candidates. She just used her intuition to find the correct one. She still could not translate the sentence where there was the word “annai” because the dictionary translation was not quite a right fit with the sentence. There was one number in the pages she read. For the number, she wrote it down to make sure she understood it correctly. Throughout the reading, she kept saying “ano...” rather than “um…”

Again, in the second observation, Grace utilized several strategies. As in the first session, she guessed the unfamiliar words with other available information. Additionally, she constantly used her dictionary whenever guessing did not work. Further, when she could not completely figure out the conjugation pattern, she tried to recall a similar pattern. Lastly, throughout reading, she was constantly monitoring if she was correct and on the right track.

Grace also responded to the reading emotionally. First, she thought that the picture in the book was cute and interesting. Second, she said that reading vertically was very hard twice during the session. According to Grace, her eyes kept trying to go left to right, while she would have to read from the top to bottom, making it difficult to keep track of a word that gets cut in the middle. Moreover, she expressed her emotion when she encountered the word "teppou." She thought not knowing the meaning of the word would drive her crazy, so she had to check the meaning immediately.

Overall, Grace liked the book even though she only read the first few pages. She thought that furigana and the pictures were helpful. She also thought that the sentences in the book were straightforward, so she could understand them easily. When she finished the session, she felt proud of herself about finding the meaning of "teppou" correctly. On the other hand, reading vertically, as mentioned above, as well as the way the book reported speech were challenging for her. She also said that the grammar for "shimaimashita" is always confusing. In the end, even though she understood the book well, she also said that she was not sure if she would be able to understand another book at the same level. She believed that it would depend on the topic as well.

Felicia

Felicia's SDL

Felicia started teaching herself when she received a textbook from her friend. Right before she visited Japan, she had a native-speaker tutor to brush up her conversation skills. After she came back from the Japan visit, she started taking local community classes. While doing so, she also bought a kanji-learning book to learn more kanji by herself. How she had studied with the community classes and kanji book were rather orthodox. She mentioned that she was not a fan of utilizing online resources and

communities for her Japanese learning. For the community classes, she would preview the assigned pages for the next class. Since her community classes were relaxed and slow-paced, she did not invest much time, about an hour extra in addition to the actual class time, to review and preview textbooks. It was also in part because she could catch up with the classes fine, so she did not think she would need to study much more. Like Grace, Felicia mentioned her ideal situations of learning several times during the first interview. Additionally, she also knew her weakness well as well as not having a concrete goal was not good for learning.

With respect to kanji learning, Felicia started with the first page and learned kanji characters page by page. She would make flashcards to learn each kanji and kanji in words. She eventually learned a few hundred kanji characters but had to suspend her study when she had her son. Since then, she had not been able to come back to her routine learning yet.

Felicia seemed to be more motivated to learn kanji than taking the community classes although she still enjoyed attending her classes. Since she did not aim at improving her Japanese fluency but rather wanted to be able to read authentic readings eventually, so that she could just read online rather than talking to other people, learning kanji was more aligned with her goal. She expressed how she thought about learning Japanese in her interview:

> F: So, um, but one of the goals I think that motivated me to start learning kanji was actually to be able to read in Japanese even if it's just online, you know, um…
>
> R: Like authentic readings?
>
> F: Like authentic readings, eventually, which I know it's a very long process. But, um, that's something that I'm interested in it. But um, practical.. so, it's.. I don't have very many practical goals, and I don't expect any kind of fluency. I just..

> um, I just find it interesting and I want to know more, I think. A lot of people learn language, I think, to communicate, which makes sense, but for me, I'm also just.. I enjoy the problem solving part of it or puzzle part of it.

Like Grace, Felicia had intrinsic interests in the Japanese language itself, but her connection to the culture was so remote that she was considering learning Japanese as more like learning a subject like math.

Further, since she was also well aware of how long it would take to learn kanji characters and their combinations, she knew that she had to come up with something to have a better learning experience and support her self-directed learning within her limited time to spend on learning Japanese. She commented in the first interview:

> I think the biggest one is just being a mother of a, of an infant. Hahaha. Um, it's been hard to find time to just, actually accomplish my professional goals. You know, I have been writing research articles, and so… even though I'm really interested, it's hard because it's not a professional goal. It's hard to make time for this right now. So I think time is the hardest part. I think also time and also, like your, like you're asking before there is not really a concrete goal, like we're going to Japan in a year or there is nobody really, there is not like um a person in my life who I need to speak Japanese with, and so… um, so it's easy to… you know, not do it. Huhuhu.

Felicia commented on how difficult it was to continue to learn Japanese in an SDL environment, especially with family, like Grace. Since Felicia had less Japanese experience and fluency with less external support, it would be more difficult to work on her own.

Despite the fact that Felicia did not like to use online resources for her Japanese learning, she would still use online resources to access Japanese culture. She mentioned that her husband and she occasionally watched a series of videos on YouTube called *Cooking with Dog*. Although the series is about Japanese cooking, the entire show is targeted to a foreign audience and hence it is in English with a strange Japanese accent.

However, Felicia also mentioned that she would try to read Japanese characters on labels whenever they appeared.

As her profession might indicate, Felicia was very excited to participate in the reading project. At the same time, she was also not sure how much time she would be able to spend on the project because of her baby son. Due to her beginning-level proficiency, she received all the Level 0 books, most of the Level 1 books, and some Level 2 books.

Felicia's Reading Project

Felicia read 18 books in total during the four-week period. She read eight authentic books, while she read ten graded readers. Although she read slightly more graded readers than authentic books, the number of authentic books (about 10) she received was smaller than the number of graded readers (about 20). Felicia did not read any online articles. She was not expecting to be able to read much due to her circumstances; however, at the end, she was very surprised at how much she could read.

Upon reading, Felicia took my advice on extensive/pleasure reading and started from Level 0, then 1 followed by 2 except for the first book. She picked the first book, *Ringo Desu*, randomly, right after she came home after the first interview with me. Subsequently, she tended to pick authentic books first for the first two levels then proceeded to graded readers. For Level 2 books, she started out with graded readers and read one authentic book. She explained how she selected books in the second interview:

> R: Ah, okay. Nice. Um… so….. so, how… I know that you first kind of organized the books by the levels, and then… how did you decide which books to read?
>
> F: Um… I would really just.. choose what looks interesting to me at that time or what I felt like reading, so …
>
> R: Is that by the, the cover?

> F: The cover, would really influence me.. yeah, um.. or… I knew that, for example, if I was commuting on the bus, to work, I wanted to bring something that was small and compact. I didn't want to bring a big children's book. I thought that graded readers would be more appropriate.
>
> R: Okay.
>
> F: But yeah, it was just going.. I didn't have a plan, I was just going with what appealed to me at the time, and I guess as the month passed I went.. level.. level from level 0 to level 2..

Felicia commented that both illustrations as well as the sizes of books were important for to determine a book to read on a given day. Otherwise, she did not have any other plan except for going from the lower level to the higher.

Felicia read almost every day except for the days when she was sick or had special events. When she could not read books as much as she wished during a week, she was disappointed. Each reading session was very short: about 10-15 minutes mostly. She read in various occasions: at home while her son was napping, during her commute, during her office hours, etc. She even read some of the books to her son to share reading experiences. She seemed to find new ways to learn Japanese through reading without feeling very bad about it. For some books, she read multiple times, once by herself and the other time with her son. Moreover, she intentionally tried different strategies book by book to find a strategy that would fit her schedule and to have a better reading experience. This also implies her metacognitive skills that she was monitoring her success in learning. She also came up with an original project on her own, which was to translate an English children's book called *Cleo's Color Book* into Japanese.

Felicia liked most of the books. She commented in her journal entries that the illustrations of the books she read were cute. She preferred stories or topics that have connections to her preferences and hobbies such as cats and food. She also displayed a

greater interest in the stories about Japanese culture rather than reading Western stories. She reasoned about why she did not like some Western stories in the second interview:

> R: Ah, okay. You mentioned something and you didn't like, *Akazukin-chan* [(Little Red Riding Hood)] much?
>
> F: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Haha. It's kind of a weird story. Haha. It's depressing, but I know I think what happened was I just…… um, I don't know, it's very, it's very repetitive and…um, I think I just.. it was my first level 2 reader, maybe that was part of it, too. It just.. took a long time.
>
> R: Oh, okay. You said that repetitive means like some language are repetitive?
>
> F: Yeah. Which can be really useful as a language learner, but somehow I got bored. And there were other moments when I really liked that. So it could just be the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* for me.
>
> R: Yeah, I think you said somewhere like, um, *Sanbiki no Kobuta* [(The Three Little Pigs)], maybe? I didn't read that carefully at the moment. I didn't have time.
>
> F: The last one, yeah.
>
> R: But I was reading the journals yesterday, and then..
>
> F: No, it's true. And I think, yeah, without when I liked that, the repetition had me remember certain vocabulary and reinforced it, so I don't know what it was but maybe literal writing for me.. didn't… I just don't think that's just interesting story.

Felicia could not explain why she did not like *Akazukin-chan* (Little Red Riding Hood) well. She thought that it was too redundant, while she also realized that it would be good for learning Japanese. Based on this excerpt, it can be concluded that there were several factors that affected Felicia's impressions of the books. However, whether or not the book was interesting to her in the first place was the most important factor. Felicia also commented that she thought books would be more interesting if they had something new to her, such as Japanese cultural information. Nonetheless, she was very happy that she could connect her real life and hobbies to this reading project. She thought that reading

Japanese children's books in this project was not really "studying" Japanese but more like a break, which Grace also said about Japanese learning. Her sensation of reading books for Japanese learning was described well in her first journal entry:

> This afternoon I walked home with two big bags of books from the researcher. I had to relieve my husband, who had been caring for our son, so I quickly snuck a peak at one of the books when I had a spare moment – a children's book called りんごです [Ringo Desu (I'm an Apple)]. I read the book silently to myself, then, a few minutes later, with my son, who was attentive but pretty sleepy.
>
> There are only three words in the entire book; it is a minimalist book, like a lot of children's books, but conveys a pretty sophisticated concept for a child: it lets you appreciate the ways that a word or phrase (signifier) can mean many things – for instance, "apple" can mean an apple seed, an apple tree, the rosy apples of a girl's cheeks (metaphor), or something to eat.
>
> Although I selected it somewhat at random, this book was exactly what I needed. I had been feeling down on myself for not having kept up with my Japanese studies and for feeling so disoriented when trying to read new material in front of the researcher. In general, I have been experiencing low self-confidence as I adjust to my new role as a mother and try to integrate former interests – like studying Japanese – into my new life. Reading りんごです [Ringo Desu (I'm an Apple)], however, was a very joyful, confidence-boosting experience because, as silly as this sounds, it made me realize that I can read and understand an entire book in Japanese! It also let me integrate my roles as a Japanese learner and as a parent by sharing the book with my son.
>
> Right now, I am feeling excited about the next month of reading and the opportunity to delve into Japanese after a six-month hiatus but also apprehensive that I won't stick with it or find the time to read.

Felicia was not very happy about her performance during the learning observation. However, when she randomly picked up the book *Ringo Desu* ("I'm an Apple") after she came home, she immediately got hooked with the book. After that, she kept reading books throughout her reading project. Felicia, by far, indeed managed her time better than most of the participants despite the fact that she was still a beginner and had not studied Japanese for a while.

As mentioned above, Felicia did not read online articles at all during her reading project. She commented on why she did not read them in the interview:

> I didn't read any of [online articles]. Haha. I thought at some point I should probably try it and I just never did. Haha. But maybe in the future… but I think.. yeah, I just kinda felt like… I don't know, the books are more interesting to me and they were more accessible..

Felicia said that online articles were not very accessible, even though she has a smartphone and a tablet. At the same time, she also admitted that she was not really a technology person in addition to the fact that books and reading were very important for her identity.

Felicia pointed out several advantages and disadvantages in pleasure reading. First, she mentioned that repetition helps language learners. Second, she thought it would be helpful to learn vocabulary in context rather than learn it separately. Third, the fact that reading was for fun and not learning was helpful for her to relax and continue her studies without a sense of obligation. On the other hand, Felicia thought that the book length could be both an advantage and a disadvantage of pleasure reading for SDL. For her, Level 2 books were a little too long, and she could not finish the books within one session. This, in turn, led her to feel that she had not accomplished anything. If the Level 2 books were shorter like Level 0 and 1 books, they would have fit into her life style fine. She wrote in her journal entry:

> The only drawback, again, is the amount of time it takes for me to read at this level; I am still only halfway through the text! So, there isn't the same sense of accomplishment as quickly reading an easier text and completing the task in one sitting.

On the other hand, not having a gloss in books may bother some readers. In Felicia's case, even though she was advised not to use a dictionary during reading as much as possible as per extensive reading's guideline, she still wanted to use one to check the

words that she did not know. She tried a few tools to check words, but occasionally she became frustrated, as the correct translation did not show up.

Felicia thought that her experience during the reading project was eye-opening. Her perception towards reading Japanese had changed as she expressed in her journal entry:

> My son and husband were running late in traffic, so I decided to take a few minutes to read a book while waiting for them to come home from daycare. I read 今日のご飯 [Kyoo no Gohan (Today's Dinner)], which had initially caught my eye for the beautiful illustrations. I really enjoyed this book – the topic of "what's for dinner?" was inherently engaging, the writing was a good match for my proficiency level, and the book even featured a feline narrator! I also like to peek into people's homes, so it was fun to be able to do so through the drawing style and subject matter of this book.
>
> This was a nice use of reading in Japanese to pass the time and alleviate my worry – again, it challenged my preconception that reading as a foreign language student should be for study and self-improvement only.

Felicia mentioned in the journal entry that she would not need to "study" for better proficiency in order to be a Japanese learner. Rather, just reading Japanese books for fun would be enough as a Japanese learner. Because of this realization, she thought that she could continue her self-learning after this project. She would just take it easy and not expect specific proficiency improvement.

With respect to technology use, she found her favorite app while reading. At first, she was using Google Translate, which had several flaws and frustrated her. She found a dictionary app called Japanese by Spacehamster, which is a free app. In the meantime, she also found a game app for Japanese learning, but she did not want to invest money in that. Moreover, she also explored the Internet to search for information about extensive reading. She found a blog where the author wrote about her experience with Japanese ER. At the same time, she also found a limitation of technology while searching for an app.

The game app she found was only for iOS. Since she has an Android phone, she needed to download it on her iPad. It made her feel a little inconvenienced. Lastly and interestingly, she said that she purposefully searched for more technology options because of this research. Since she knew that one of the purposes of the present study was to examine the role of technology in self-directed learning, she attempted to look for technology tools. Regardless, after the reading project, she became more open to trying additional technology options.

At the end of this reading project, Felicia exhibited her wish to continue this project. She was not necessarily the one who read the most for this reading project among the five participants, but she was probably the one who thrived from this experience the most. Although she would probably not continue her own translation project, she mentioned that she might look for more social opportunities to continue her learning.

Felicia's Learning Observation

Felicia used the textbook that she used for the community class for her first learning observation session. She tried to study a new chapter of the textbook, which consisted of a dialogue followed by vocabulary explanation, grammar explanation, and exercises. She first started to read the dialogue, but before she started, she commented that reading dialogue would be challenging because she would have to read the dialogue that contain new grammar concepts and vocabulary that she has not learned yet. She started reading the dialogue, reading Japanese first and then translating; however, soon after she realized that she had forgotten some kanji characters that she knew before. As a result, she could not translate the sentence, which led her to look at the English translation. She continued, but since she was continuously having difficulty in understanding the dialogue, she went on to the vocabulary/grammar section. She read the

explanation about the phrase “sorosoro,” but she could not exactly understand what the phrase meant. She felt frustrated with this experience. She commented that she would have asked for clarification if she had actually been taking a class. After this, she went back to the dialogue to continue, but she kept having trouble with understanding the dialogue. She commented that she was out of practice. She also said that she was feeling disoriented because she had not learned the new grammar. Additionally, again, she said she felt disoriented, as she did not know some of the kanji characters that she was reading. Then she felt confused because the textbook did not have a note attached, which it was supposed to have. Upon completing the dialogue, she was not sure what she would want to do next, but she also mentioned that she would read through the notes, so that she could have a sense of what was going on in the dialogue. When completing the learning session, she felt frustrated with the textbook because of the following reasons: (1) the textbook organization, (2) she could not find what was a take away from the chapter, and (3) she needed to go to an additional page to understand details about a word.

Felicia used a few strategies during her learning session. She monitored herself well, so that she knew when she needed the English reference. She also skipped what she did not understand to move on. Overall, negative feelings were seen during the learning session. She constantly felt disoriented, confused and frustrated, as it was a long time after she had come back to the textbook and as the organization of the textbook was somewhat out of order.

For the second learning session, I asked Felicia to read a Level 1 graded reader, titled *Fune*. She first looked at the picture of the cover page and guessed the story was going to be some kind of romantic story. She started reading the first page of the content, by looking at the picture first and guessed that the couple had just got married. She read a Japanese sentence first, then translated into English. Soon after she started reading, there

were some sentences that she was not sure if she was correct. She looked up the unknown words with her app that she found during the reading project; however, she could not find the translation that seemed to be correct. Hence, she just moved on, commenting that the dictionary was not as useful as she had wanted to be. When she saw the word "Ryota," she guessed that it would the name of one of the characters in the story, but she was not sure about her guess. Then, later, she became sure about her guess with the picture she saw in the book. During this learning session, she appeared to be very concentrated on reading and thinking; she sometimes skipped reading Japanese sentences or offering an English translation. Later, there were some words she could not remember the meaning of, including "dame" and "wakai." She became confused about one sentence in terms of the subject. She also could guess the word, "kyookai" (church), with the picture and the rest of the sentence. This time, she did not want to skip any unfamiliar words. If she found an unfamiliar word, she would look it up with her app.

In this learning session, Felicia again utilized the guessing strategy like the first session. This time, she utilized her dictionary app and tried not to skip any unfamiliar words. With respect to emotion, she was not negative in this learning session. She once got confused with one of the sentences while she was reading, but overall, it was neutral or positive during reading.

Hazel

Hazel's SDL

At the time of the study, Hazel was taking a Japanese class at her university, so during the semester, she did not really have time to learn Japanese on her own. For her school work, she used a website called Quizlet to learn vocabulary. However, since this

was the third time for her to learn the same chapters (she previously learned them in high school), she would not need to study extensively for her Japanese class.

During school break, she would play games, watch videos in Japanese and look for information about Japanese games, etc. Her recent favorite game was called *Boku no Natsuyasumi* (My Summer Break). She played it during the summer before she started college. She had also played *Neko Atsume* (Cat Collection), which is a game app for a smartphone. She played in Japanese first; however, she mentioned that she also played the English version, which she did not like at all, during the reading project. Additionally, she utilized Internet resources, such as Google, to search for information and the meanings of words and an electronic dictionary website called jisho.org. She also had a dictionary app on her phone called JED.

Hazel was confident with her Japanese learning overall. Although she was aware of her weakness (speaking), she was very optimistic that she would be able to improve her speaking skills eventually, as she was planning to do study abroad in Japan in a few years. Additionally, since her goal was to become a translator / localization specialist in a game company, speaking was not as relevant and important as other skills such as reading and listening.

Further, Hazel was the only one who did not mention kanji as a challenging aspect of Japanese reading among the other participants. She mentioned that the more challenging aspect of Japanese was the fact that she did not know all the grammar constructions. In the interview, she expressed her opinion about Japanese reading:

> R: Okay. Um, so in your opinion, what aspect of Japanese reading is challenging to you?
>
> H: Um, it's honestly not the kanji. It's probably just the grammatical structures that I don't know.

R: Okay.

H: Because.. then like if I try to decide them by the things I do know, I get really confused because not close... it, it, it looks close maybe, but it's not close at all, then I just like, I think I have jumping off point but I don't really, it's like a false jumping off point, so that's frustrating. Um, ... That, that's definitely most difficult aspect because if you don't know the grammatical structures, and you don't like, you are unable to identify what they are and then look them up, then it's like you are stuck. But with kanji, you can usually look up.

R: Okay. How, how do you look up kanji when you don't understand? Copy and paste?

H: Copy and paste. If I'm unable to, I try to use hand writing, um, methods in... like electronic dictionaries?

R: You have electronic dictionary?

H: Hm-hm. Either like here or just on the internet. They have them.

Hazel did not think kanji was a challenging aspect of Japanese reading unlike other participants. For her, because she could look up all the kanji on her electronic dictionary or with the Internet, kanji was not difficult. In addition, she compared the differences between Chinese characters in Japanese (kanji) and in Chinese (hanzi):

> Chinese is literally just all, hanzi. It's... I mean, as long as you know what the ones mean, then it's easier, but when you don't know, it's like.. I can't tell if that's... an article, particle, or if that's a noun or verb or what tense, it's hard. Versus Japanese you can kind of figure it out. Like, I mean, as long as you just look at like the root, or like the verb or something, while I can tell if this is a noun compound, then it's easier to decide to kind of get a general idea even if, without looking like look it up, versus Chinese is just like I don't know.

When Hazel talked about Chinese hanzi, she sounded like other participants commenting on kanji being difficult. However, she had only learned Chinese for a year, and the conditions in which she would read Chinese were different from those for Japanese. She did not own an electronic dictionary for Chinese, so she could not look up unfamiliar hanzi easily.

Hazel explained that she also had read an authentic Japanese website to obtain information about a game she would play. As the information in English was lacking, she had to access the Japanese website. Even though the website reading was difficult, she thought that the experience was enjoyable and that she could learn about Japanese culture. Additionally, in her high school class, she had read NHK EasyWeb for a short period of time. She was aware that the news website would provide her with more readings beyond class materials, but she had not accessed the website for her additional learning after the class was over.

Upon participating in this reading project, she displayed a positive reaction. However, she was more interested in participating in a research study itself rather than seeking opportunities to read more.

Hazel's Reading Project

Hazel had slightly over a month for her reading project due to a schedule conflict for the second interview. During her reading project, she read a total of 12 reading materials, which were a mixture of online articles, graded readers and authentic readings. Specifically, she read four NHK EasyWeb articles, two graded readers, and five authentic books. She also mentioned later that she carried an authentic book, *Kureyon Shinchan* (Crayon Shin-chan), with her to read at some point, but it did not happen. She read these materials between study time at her dorm room, during her commute on the bus to a babysitting job, and on weekends by herself or together with her friends who did not understand Japanese. Hazel translated some content for her friends.

The lengths of reading sessions varied. Sometimes, she only had about 15 minutes to read; other times, she had over an hour to read. It depended on the timing and what and how she was reading at that time. For example, when she read two NHK news articles,

she read them within 15 minutes. Since she was not using the dictionary and one of the articles was not very interesting to her in addition to the fact that she was reading these articles between her studies, she did not take long to read them. On the other hand, when she read a manga book, *Atashinchi* (My Home), she read for over three hours, as she liked it very much and it was during the weekend when she read it.

Hazel selected these readings based on several reasons. First, she tried to organize the readings she received on her bookshelf according to the book levels. Then, when it came to her reading time, she selected books based on the following criteria but did not necessarily use all of them to select a book: (1) level, (2) title (or the content that could be guessed from the title), and (3) illustrations. For example, she selected her very first book, *Dooshite Umi no Mizu wa Shio-karai?* (Why is Sea Water Salty?), which is a Level 1 book, based on level and title. In the interview, she said:

> Because I hadn't actually heard any stories like in my childhood either, about .... Why this, why the uh, sea is salt. Because sea is salty, sea water is salty. So I was curious as to like what..third, fourth floor explanation was. I just picked it up in class learning.

For this book, one can conclude that Hazel selected this book mostly because of its title in addition to the level. On the other hand, when she picked an authentic book called *Boku no Kaerimichi* (On My Way Home), she decided to read it mostly due to illustrations in addition to the level of the book. Later in the reading project, she decided not to read lower graded books because of the experience she had in the first two weeks. Although some books were enjoyable, she thought that repetition was rather boring and not important for her Japanese learning. Additionally, she mentioned in her journal entries several times that she planned to read a certain amount of readings. Even though she could not follow her plans, she was planning what to do with the reading project. She mentioned that she even included reading in her to-do list, which is discussed again later.

When reading materials, Hazel incorporated several strategies to read better and have a better learning experience. First, she had a dictionary that she had been using. Whenever she encountered words that she did not know and thought worth checking, she would use her dictionary. She would also consult jisho.org in addition to her dictionary when she wants to know more example sentences. For online reading, since the website had a hover-over gloss function, she would also use it. For lower-level reading materials, she would sometimes guess the meanings of the words that she did not know from the context. Since there were only a few words that she did not know in the lower-level reading materials, she could guess without a problem. Finally, she would write out vocabulary that she did not know and wanted to know to make a list on a piece of paper. She did this only towards the end of the project and for the manga book that she very much enjoyed reading.

Overall, Hazel enjoyed this reading project. However, there was definitely a mood shift during her reading project. At first, she appeared to be very motivated to read. She read the first nine readings within the first ten days. She constantly tried to read different types of readings (i.e., online, graded readers, authentic books). She enjoyed some of the books, while she did not enjoy the others. There were mainly two reasons why she did not enjoy some books. First, she could not understand some of the keywords in the content, which made it difficult to understand the overall meaning. Second, she did not like repetition in lower-level graded readers and children's books, as mentioned above. Hence, she did not enjoy reading the books with repetition. Additionally, the topic was important for her to like the readings. She also did not like to read an online article about politics, which she did not have much knowledge about, while she enjoyed another article about gay marriage in Japan, as she just learned about it in her ethics class.

During her third week, Hazel could not read at all due to her busy school schedule. However, she also mentioned in her journal entry that she started feeling good about the reading project. She wrote:

> I didn't read this week because I was feeling inordinately stressed out. In one of my classes I was getting preemptively stressed for the final essay in that class, and in the other class I was stressed out about a presentation due at the end of that week. I was able to get an extension, so that helped me feel better. But, because I also did not have to babysit for about 4 or 5 days, I indulged in the extra free time to just laze around, which is generally bad but felt good for my mental health. I was also starting to feel like reading was a chore and also that I felt guilty for not doing it, but yet lacking the motivation to continue.

Hazel did not like the fact that reading had become like a chore. She did not quit reading; yet she decided not to continue with graded readers and children's books, which she thought were a partial reason for her low motivation. In the in-person interview, she revealed that she wrote down this project in her "To-Do" list, which made her feel like doing a chore:

> It was, it was a negative feeling because I was like, I wanted to be fun, and I wanted to do a good job for you, and then when I was like, oh, why is it feeling like a chore, it is probably, it is probably feeling like a chore because of.. like, ... So I felt, I felt the impulse like I need to do well for you, and I also have.. my... school activities, and so like, when I put it on the list, like, oh, I'm gonna do this and this and this, like, school is a chore, I mean, something like linguistic class, that's fun, but still, school is a chore. And if I put it like on the list, it feels like a chore, okay, next thing on the list is this, versus is like, I'm gonna read, and that's how.. that's why I like this so much because when I... uh, used to do.. read it, it was like, oh, I'm just gonna read now, because it's fun versus like, oh I should read, you know, I should read a book. I should read a graded reader.

For Hazel, the reading project had become like school work during the first half of the reading project, even though she knew that it did not have to be.

Later, however, she discovered the book (*Atashinchi*) she liked most in this reading project. She expressed her feeling in her journal when she found *Atashinchi*:

> I decided to stop reading picture books and lower-lower level reading material, so I picked up *My Darling is a Foreigner,* and I tried to read it for 30 minutes, but I ran into two difficulties… I decided to go with あたしんち [Atashinchi (My Home)] instead. I became hooked instantly. The grammar is at my level so it's easy for me to understand, especially with the graphic aids for context. Additionally, I appreciate that the kanji typically always has furigana with it, so it is very easy for me to look up the vocabulary I do not know. I really enjoy making lists of the kanji and other vocabulary I do not know. I didn't feel bad for not being unable to understand like I had with some other readings I tried to read. Also, the type of humor in the book is the kind I like, so I'm eager to keep reading.

In addition to liking the content, Hazel also liked that most kanji had furigana. She started making a kanji/word list off the book for further learning. Moreover, the book made her feel less guilty for not understanding the content. After this journal entry, she only read *Atashinchi* until the end of the project. She also shared her reading experience with her friends.

> I kept reading あたしんち [Atashinchi (My Home)] on and off for the day, totaling about 2 hours. I'm reading it slowly to really enjoy the book. Another reason I was reading slowly is because I would be sharing the comics with my friends, translating the comics for them while showing them the funny pictures. I hope to finish it soon.

In the present research, only Felicia and Hazel shared reading with others. While Felicia read children's books to her son, which could be interpreted as if a mother reads to her child just like she does for her native language books, Hazel translated the book for her friends to share her enjoyment of the reading. In the interview, Hazel explained a little more about what happened during her shared reading experience:

> We were, we were laughing. It was.. especially that first when I mentioned where, they're coming in when mom's sleeping on the floor. I was, I was telling her and like... it was my confidence 'cause I'm like, oh, I know this stuff is and say it. Um, not of course, not having accuracy but still good enough ... and uh, we both were laughing over of like.. that's something I would do if I was a mom. I would be just sleeping on the floor. Not caring about like parents. Oh, I mean, eating chips from the thing you were serving. I told my dad later because friend told me like, oh, it's so funny. He was like.. he didn't get it. Haha.

Hazel had so much fun with *Atashinchi* and wanted to invest more in her learning time.

Despite the fact that Hazel considered herself as a visual person, so that she liked manga far better than the other types of readings in this project, not all manga pleased her. Although she only read two books (she carried the third manga book with her for a while but did not get to read it), she liked only one of them and disliked the other. The other book she read was *My Darling is a Foreigner*. She identified mainly two reasons why she did not like the book. First, the English translation was right below the Japanese text, so she thought it was too distracting. Second, she did not like the main character of the book. She thought the character was very annoying. While Grace liked the same book due to the emphasis on storytelling, Hazel did not, so that she stopped reading it.

From Hazel's reading project, she experienced a few advantages and disadvantages of pleasure reading. First, just like Grace and Felicia, Hazel found that short stories fit her lifestyle better, as she could finish reading within a short period of time. Although her favorite book, *Atashinchi*, is a 200-page comic book, it contains multiple short stories. Hence, even though she could not finish the entire book quickly, she could still read one episode and come back to the book later when she had time. Second, she could read her favorite book for a long time. Despite the fact that this reading project was not required, she spent over three hours reading *Atashinchi* just because she liked it very much. Although it is difficult to tell whether or not she was in a flow state without watching her in person, it proves that learners could spend long time on reading as long as they found their favorite books. Third, she found that the hover-over gloss function on online articles was a useful function. She did not have to check the meanings of the new vocabulary even though the meanings were written in simplified Japanese, but still in Japanese. She could shorten her reading time with this function.

On the contrary, Hazel found that she did not want to read online articles or use a dictionary during her commute. She owned a smartphone, and it was possible for her to access online materials or use an online dictionary from anywhere during her reading project. However, she wanted to save the phone battery for some other usage. Additionally, as mentioned above, she did not find repetition in books helpful at all unlike Felicia. Hazel thought that repetition was just boring.

Unlike other participants, Hazel did not think the experience of this reading project had changed her perception of reading. She was generally confident about learning Japanese, and reading was no exception. She knew that there would be a long way to go to achieve her goal, but she did not think anything about the Japanese language itself or her ability to learn Japanese would be a stumbling block. On the other hand, she said in the interview that she would try to explore ways to get authentic books, such as a local library, Half Price Bookstore, or even on Amazon Japan. Additionally, when I offered to lend her *Atashinchi* over the winter break since she did not finish the book and wanted to purchase the subsequent volume, she wanted to borrow it.

With respect to technology use, she did not fundamentally change what she had used. Online articles were not necessarily a new experience for her, as she had read on NHK EasyWeb a little in her high school Japanese class. However, she mentioned that she downloaded a new dictionary app for her iPad for a better dictionary.

From Hazel's interview, it appears that there were some external influences on her learning. First, there was an influence from myself. She said in the interview that she had wanted to do her best for me despite the fact that I had emphasized that the project was not required, perhaps because I was her former teacher. Moreover, Hazel was also influenced by her friends and classmates to some extent. Since she was sharing her reading experience with *Atashinchi*, the fact that she could share the material with her

friends might have positively affected her. Additionally, as she was taking a class during her reading project, she had influences from her classmates as well. Although it was only mentioned briefly, she explained that she read *Atashinchi* during her class. Some of her classmates commented on what she was reading. With such interaction, it might have influenced how Hazel approached or how she perceived the book in some way.

Hazel's Learning Observation

Hazel used the web application called Quizlet to study some words for her Japanese class on her iPad in the first learning session. Prior to this session, she had already made a list on her own. Before starting the learning session, she mentioned that she would make her own list to learn vocabulary, as she would not trust the vocabulary list that other learners had created. When she started learning the vocabulary set, she first changed the mode of Quizlet to English - Japanese, with which she would need to look at English translations and type the matching words in Japanese. This vocabulary set consisted of words that she had most difficulty in memorizing. Since this was not the first time she reviewed the material, she did not have difficulty in remembering and typing the words. When she tried to think of the word "chikamichi," she commented that she almost always read the kanji as "chikadoo," not "chikamichi." Also, she said that she was always tempted to say "yoko" for the word "oodanhodoo"'s "oo" because of the use of the same kanji. Additionally, she explained a drawback of using this application on the iPad. Since the iPad automatically tried to change the words she typed into kanji, she felt it was cheating. She said that this was not the case with her laptop. Moreover, she was feeling the inconvenience of using this Quizlet for her circumstance. Since her vocabulary set is small, it would be easy to learn, but the learning effect might not be reflected when she put these words in context. For this session, since Hazel had an appointment right after

the session, she only had four minutes to learn the vocabulary. Hence, she only learned five to six words.

Due to the short length of the learning session as well as the fact that Hazel was almost done with the vocabulary list, there were only a few strategies observed. First of all, the fact that she used Quizlet was a strategy. Additionally, she seemed to constantly think about what the word or kanji is associated with. For example, she mentioned several other ways to read a given kanji. With respect to emotional involvement, she was positive overall about using Quizlet and learning the vocabulary. While she also mentioned a drawback of using different media, her tone of voice did not necessarily sound negative.

For the second observation, I asked Hazel to read a Level 3 graded reader called *Tengu no Hana* (The Nose of Tengu). Although she might have had an initial impression of the book, she did not say anything about the cover page and the picture but just started reading the content. She first read a phrase or a sentence in Japanese and tried to interpret it. Earlier in the session, she could not understand the kanji for iu (to say), but she said that it was not a big deal. Then, she tried to guess a word that she did not know from the context. Although she thought that the word was "bashi," it was actually "kuchibashi" (beek). She seemed to cut the word in half, as she knew the word "kuchi," which is mouth. When there was a word that she did not know or whose meaning she could not guess, she showed frustration and felt discomfited that she did not know it. Like the last time, she talked about an alternative way to read a kanji, which was "isogu." She said that she would associate the kanji for "isogu" with the word "kyukyusha" (ambulance). She commented that it was a little hard to read vertically. She also explained that there were words whose meaning she knew but she just could not pay attention while she was reading.

There were several strategies that I could observe in this learning session. First, Hazel tried to guess several unfamiliar words and did not use her dictionary when reading. This guessing strategy was applied at both a word level and a story level. When she did not understand some words in a sentence, she made up a story for herself to make sense of the entire story. Additionally, like the last time, she was thinking about other options that she could associate with a kanji. There was more emotional involvement in this session compared to the last learning session. As mentioned above, she felt uncomfortable and frustrated when she encountered a word she could not understand. On the other hand, when she encountered the words that she did not know but could guess, she always reacted with a surprise. For example, when she saw the grammar construction, "kara demo," she was very glad because she never saw the words together and did not know if she could use them that way. She also said that she liked the story. In fact, there were several times when she laughed while reading. She said that when she imagined what the *tengu* (goblin) would be like based on what it did, it was very funny.

Henry

Henry's SDL

At the time of the study, Henry was watching Japan TV every day, and he also read Japanese books that had English translations next to the Japanese scripts. He said that he would understand at least 80% of what he watched on Japan TV. Needless to say, he also read whatever scripts appear on TV. He spent a few hours every day on these two activities. While he was traveling, he accessed an app with which he could review kanji characters. He said that he only used the app while at the airport. According to him, he was not actively involved in Japanese learning. He did these activities to maintain his level but not necessarily to improve his fluency. Moreover, he regularly went back to

Japan to visit his parents and relatives. During these visits, he would get some Japanese input and would try out his Japanese with his family as well as with strangers. He said that he would be fine with his relatives, but there would be communication problems with strangers often times. When he had opportunities, he would also purchase some books for his learning while he was in Japan.

Henry attended a community Japanese class, but his work was so busy that he could not continue. However, he did not show a negative sentiment about it. He mentioned that, since he already took all the college courses when he was in college and graduate school, there would not be a class that exactly matched his level. Because he was busy with his work, learning Japanese by himself would fit his lifestyle.

Henry's goal was to improve overall Japanese fluency, not necessarily only kanji skills. He explained that he had forgotten many things about Japanese while he was away from his studies, especially grammar. He also thought that, even though he had finished all the college Japanese courses and had been learning Japanese his entire life, his level was not quite advanced. He said that there would be a huge gap between where he was now and the advanced level and that he would like to get there.

Henry identified his greatest weakness as kanji. Although he once learned many of the commonly used kanji (about 1,000 kanji characters), he forgot almost all of them. While he still wanted to go back to his previous level of kanji skill, he was not committed enough to learn kanji again. With respect to other skills, even though he was aware that he was not perfect, he did not think there were any special difficulties with those skills. In order to overcome his weakness, he explained his plan in the interview:

> H: Yeah, so... I just.. uh, I think I'm gonna take the JLPT tests and uh, start the next week. This first, uh, level 5, I, I've done the study for it. Haha. So.. I'm just gonna call... but I think I'm gonna be okay.

…

H: Ohhh, I see. Okay. Oh, I didn't know. Next time I will...I think once I get to Level 3, that's when I have to kinda.. study a little more.

R: Ah, okay. Level 3 need...to know.. 500..kanji?

H: Is that right? Yeah, yeah.

R: Level 2 is 1,000, I think. Level 1 is 2,000.

H: I had once…at one point I was up to 1,000. But I forgot.. most of it, so…

Henry thought that, if he scheduled a test to take, then he would study for it, which included kanji practice. Although he could use his pleasure reading books for kanji learning, he did not think that would be a good idea.

R: Yeah. Okay... So do you think that reading you are doing right now, is it helpful in terms of learning kanji?

H: No.... I am not retaining it but it's good in terms of phrases. Idiomatic phrases and all the stuff, so yeah.... That's what I find. Uhh, but I'm not retaining any kanji I, I learn in these books.

R: I guess retaining part you need ...[inaudible]

H: Yeah, I need that. I have to, I need to repeat it... so in the past, I would write it down... but I'm not doing that now. I'm just reading through it. Just... first time, yeah.

Henry's challenge was rather retaining kanji than learning new kanji. As he once learned about 1,000 kanji, he would like to retrieve his old memory. For that, he thought writing kanji and rote learning would be the best approach and that was what he had been doing for his learning.

With respect to reading materials themselves, Henry thought they were satisfactory. He was fine with the books even though they were not very helpful for retaining kanji. It was rather his own responsibility and not the books' fault. Plus, he could still learn idioms and other expressions. Moreover, as he could buy books in Japan

when traveling and knew he could get books from amazon.com, he did not think there was a shortage of Japanese reading materials.

It was difficult to tell whether or not Henry was excited about participating in this reading project. However, when I explicitly asked if he was excited, he said yes. He appreciated that he had more opportunities to get himself invested in Japanese learning. When he left the interview, he also said that he would finish all the books he received from me.

Henry's Reading Project

Henry had about two months to complete his reading project, as he visited Japan for about three weeks during the reading project. Since there was no other participant in the reading project at that time, he received most of the books from me except for a few books that Hazel wanted to borrow after the project. He read most among the other participants: 47 books in total. He mostly read graded readers and several authentic children's books. On the other hand, he did not read online articles. He read almost every day, whenever he could, in the evening after he came back from work. He mostly spent about 30 minutes to an hour for reading per session. During his Japan visit, he took several books with him and read about three books. Additionally, he continued to watch Japan TV every day just like he did previously while participating in this reading project.

Since Henry declared that he would complete all the books in the first interview, he was not very careful about selecting which books to read. He started out with a book that was on top of the stack and read several. He then realized how difficulty varied between levels. Next, he tried reading from lower levels to the higher-level ones. For lower-level books, he would read several books in one session. For higher-level books, he

might take several days to finish a book. For example, when he read a Level 5 graded reader called *Sakamoto Ryoma* (Ryoma Sakamoto), he took two days to complete it.

From the journal entries as well as the second interview, it was not very clear how Henry approached the readings other than the selection process described above. He occasionally used dictionaries to look up unfamiliar words. He also analyzed the level differences and reflected on how much he understood in the journal entries. With respect to audio CDs and mp3 files accompanying the books, he did not use them at all. He revealed in the second interview that he thought they would not be necessary just because he was reading books, not listening to them.

Although Henry's attitude towards this reading project was somewhat more neutral compared to other participants, it turned out that he enjoyed the project quite a lot. He liked several graded readers particularly, such as *Sakamoto Ryoma* and *Maneki Neko* (Beckoning Cat). Since he had read *Maneki Neko*, he even visited the temple that appeared in the book while visiting Japan. As he indicated in the previous interview that he liked history and biography, he liked such books in his project as well. He felt neutral toward the books with other topics.

With respect to online articles, he just had not thought about reading them. However, he also said that he would not want to read the articles as much because they would be too easy for him. He knew about NHK EasyWeb and had read articles on the website before even though the topic of the articles may be something that would interest him. He then found out that some of the articles were so easy that he would be bored too quickly, while their authentic readings would be too difficult to read due to kanji without furigana.

Henry thought that graded readers were useful for increasing reading speed. After reading many graded readers with this project, he became a little more confident about reading. He commented in the second interview about reading fluency:

> H: Uh, you know, I think gained more confidence in reading. You know, so typically, what I did before, I would, uh, I would read and then look up the kanji, and then it would just slow everything down. Uh.. so this was uh.. I, I can have a little more confidence in readings, more fluently, I think. That was a great thing. That was a great thing.
>
> R: Hm-hm. So .. the furigana is helpful.
>
> H: Well, without it, I think I would have been stuck in some of the books. You know, I, I, for me, uh, to learn kanji, again, I, I guess, I learned a lot of kanji before and I forgot. I do need to write it down more just to retain it, you know. And so, I hadn't been doing any of that when I was reading. I just read. So .. I realized, yeah, there are some kanji I could take up after.. at the end of the book.

Since Henry did not look up kanji thanks to the furigana aid, his reading speed increased overall. Moreover, he also mentioned an additional benefit of graded readers:

> Well, those graded readers were good because they, they introduce a vocabulary term and then explain it later in the reading. And that was very good without having to, so I didn't have to look it up. So that was very good. Very good.

Hence, together with furigana and the writing style of the book (how to introduce new vocabulary to readers), Henry's reading experience was easier than reading other books.

On the contrary, Henry noted that graded readers were not necessarily good for retaining kanji.

> The cons? Is that again, I, I don't know if I could retain this kanji again. So if you would show me the same book, two days later, without furigana, I think I'd have trouble... remembering, uh, what is this kanji, uh, what's the combination... yeah.

From what Henry said, even though furigana is helpful for reading faster without getting stuck, it would not help remembering the kanji word at least in terms of how to read it.

Henry actually started listing kanji for the JLPT in addition to reading the received materials, so that he would be able to retain the information.

Overall, Henry's perception of reading Japanese had changed to some extent. He had not experienced the particular approach to reading that he used during this project (reading through a text without looking words up), which increased his reading speed and confidence. Although kanji retention did not improve with pleasure reading, he had a positive experience with reading in Japanese in this project. At the end, he seemed to be a little disappointed, as he did not finish reading all the books. He said that he would continue working on kanji retention. Plus, he already purchased an easy reader while in Japan. He planned to read it after this reading project.

With respect to technology, there was no particular technology used during this project other than the Japan TV Henry had been watching. Watching TV for him appears to be routinized very much, as he did not change his habit at all even with the additional reading that he had.

Although it could be subtle and not stated clearly in the interview or journal entries, there was an external influence in terms of how Henry used the reading materials. Fundamentally, he took this opportunity to maximize his learning opportunity. Since the length of the reading project was limited, he tried to complete as much reading as possible.

Henry's Learning Observation

For his first learning observation session, Henry decided to learn a new lesson in the textbook that he used for the community class, *Japanese for Busy People*. He started out with the grammar section, "deshoo" (conjugation for guessing/probability). He read the grammar explanations in English, then read the Japanese example sentences and their

English translations. He kept reading to the end of the section with just one comment that the section was helpful for review. Then he moved on to the exercise section. He was not sure about one of the exercise questions. He said that he wanted to make sure if he was right. Also, he occasionally said "that's right" while doing the exercise. Next, he moved on to the grammar section about "yoo" and "mitai" (seems/looks). This was also a review for him. As he read, he commented that he forgot the use of "mitai" and "yoo" in terms of what the difference was between the two. He remembered from his experience that he used "mitai" more often but was still not too sure about their difference.

It was a little unclear if Henry fully enunciated what he was thinking during this session. Despite that, he seemed to use at least two strategies. One was the monitoring strategy. He was trying to make sure if he was correct. The other was incorporating his prior experience to figure out something (when he was reading "mitai" and "yoo"). He stayed neutral throughout the learning session in terms of emotional reaction.

For the second learning observation session, I requested that Henry read a Level 4 graded reader, *Nobuyoshi, Hideyoshi, Ieyasu*, which I thought would be his favorite genre (history) to read. He started reading the content without commenting on the cover page. Throughout the session, he simply read the Japanese sentences and did not translate into English. Soon after he started reading, there was a sentence that he did not understand immediately, so he said that he would have to read this again to understand better. When he read the second time, the sentence was still not clear to him. However, when he started reading the following Japanese senryu poems, he understood what the lines meant, as he knew about the poems. As he read more, there were times that he did not understand certain words, phrases, or overall sentences. Yet, he did not comment in terms of emotion. Later, when I asked about it, he admitted that it was confusing and frustrating.

Like the last time, it appeared that Henry was not fully engaging in the think-aloud protocol during the learning session. Nonetheless, he seemed to use the monitoring strategy, and a bit of emotion was involved during the session. After the session, I asked how he liked the reading. Henry said that he liked the reading.

OVERALL TENDENCY

The five participants in the present research had various reasons to self-learn Japanese, and their fluencies and surrounding environments were also different. Additionally, their preferences in reading materials also varied. However, there were still commonalities found from the collected data.

SDL

With respect to SDL, there were some tendencies that could be observed. First, most of the participants preferred a structured environment for learning Japanese. Courtney, Grace and Felicia explicitly stated that they would love to have a structured environment, either a classroom or textbooks. Hazel did not compare her SDL to her classroom learning; however, she mentioned that she thought that her classroom learning was very helpful. Henry did not mention his preference for a structural environment, but he had also finished six years of college Japanese.

Second, some participants strongly agreed that they needed to be socially supported even in SDL. Courtney and Grace believed that it would be difficult to continue their Japanese learning without social support. Felicia did not say so; however, she also thought that social support was generally important to continue to learn something, especially when a learner encounters a stumbling block. On the other hand, Hazel and Henry did not acknowledge any aspect of social support for their SDL.

Third, while the reasons behind it varied, Courtney, Grace and Felicia were not very confident about their SDL. Courtney had no idea what she should do for SDL; Grace was more aware of her position in learning Japanese, but not confident with her material selections for her needs; and Felicia was not confident simply because she did not have specific objectives to learn Japanese other than for fun.

Fourth, although the participants had a wide variety of learning materials with which to learn Japanese, they all used some form of dictionaries. Courtney used an Internet dictionary to look up words as well as Google. Grace and Hazel had their own electronic dictionaries that they purchased in Japan. Whereas Grace stuck to her electronic dictionary, Hazel also used Internet dictionaries. Felicia used both an Internet dictionary and Google Translate. Additionally, during the reading project, she started using an app dictionary. Henry used several online dictionaries, such as Midori.

Fifth, each participant had a different purpose in learning Japanese and therefore, their foci of specific skills that they wanted to work on were also different. Table 2 below illustrates which skills each participant wanted to or did not want to work on and their goals/objectives in learning Japanese.

Name	Skills (wanted)	Skills (unwanted)	Goals/Objectives
Courtney	listening	writing	know more about her heritage; become a facilitator for foreign worker to the company
Grace	reading	writing	maintain current level; possibly live in Japan later in the future
Felicia	reading (+grammar and vocabulary), pronunciation	writing	be able to read in Japanese
Hazel	speaking	pronunciation	work for a US-based Japanese game company as a translator
Henry	everything	-	move to Japan and live

Table 2: Desired / Undesired skills and goals for each participant.

There was great variance among the participants in terms of which skills that they want to work on the most. While Grace and Felicia both wished to work on reading most, the reasons behind their answers were different: Grace wanted to improve reading to make her Japanese skills more balanced, while Felicia specifically wanted to improve reading, so that she would be able to read novels or newspapers in Japanese and continue her learning. On the other hand, three of the five participants thought that writing was the skill that they wanted to work on the least, noting that writing was somewhat irrelevant to what they want to do with Japanese. Hazel and Henry did not mention writing as less important. Since what Hazel wanted to do with Japanese in the future was translation, writing was not unimportant for her. Similarly, since Henry wanted to move to Japan for a while, writing could be important in his future life.

Sixth, most of the participants were not engaging in reading much for their SDL prior to the study. Henry was the only one who was actively reading, reading Japanese newspapers collected in books. Grace and Hazel were reading to some extent, but only as needed. Grace read texts whenever her learning materials had reading sections. Hazel read Japanese while playing games when she looked for some information online. However, neither of them was very actively searching for more opportunities to read. Felicia said that her goal was to be able to read Japanese, but she was learning kanji to prepare for further reading for later on. She was learning kanji only because she thought that her current level would not be enough for authentic Japanese reading.

Seventh, in terms of technology use, all of them had at least tried to use some kind of technology to learn Japanese. Table 3 below summarizes technologies that the participants used for their SDL.

Name	Technologies used for SDL	Usage
Courtney	Apps (unnamed)	Learn hiragana/katakana
	Meetup	Find native speaker friends
	Online dictionary (Tangorin)	Dictionary
	Text messages	Quiz Japanese words with friends
	Google	Grammar reference
Grace	Electronic dictionary	Dictionary
	JapanesePodcast101	General Japanese learning
Felicia	YouTube show (*Cooking with Dog*)	Culture
Hazel	App (JED; *Neko Atsume*)	Dictionary, Japanese game
	Video games (*Boku no Natsuyasumi*)	Japanese game
	Videos (unnamed)	Culture
	Google	General reference
	Electronic dictionary	Dictionary
	Online dictionary (Jisho.org)	Dictionary
Henry	Apps (unnamed)	Kanji learning
	YouTube	Japanese shows
	JapanTV	Japanese shows
	Online dictionaries (Midori, Sanseido Kokugo Jitendra, Imiwa)	Look up word meanings

Table 3: Summary of Technology Tools for Self-Directed Learning.

Moreover, they thought that technology was crucial for their SDL. However, it appeared that many participants had difficulty in finding good technological learning materials for

their learning. Most of the participants appeared to prefer to use technology for their individual, independent learning only; except for Courtney, the participants who talked about language learning SNSs in the interviews were negative about the SNSs.

Lastly, most of the participants exercised some variety of metacognitive strategies, such as knowing their strengths and weaknesses and planning what to do to achieve goals, although they did not track their learning progress much. Rather, they sometimes passively relied on other information to track their progress. For example, Felicia and Hazel said that they would not keep track of their learning because they did not have problems with what they had learned. They also went together with their textbooks, so they unconsciously knew how far they progressed. None of the participants reflected on their learning progress by keeping records or journal entries.

Reading Project

With respect to the reading project, the participants had various reasons to make decisions about their reading. Further, they approached the readings differently. First, the number of readings each participant engaged is summarized below:

Name	Length	# of readings (partially) read	# of readings received (approx.)	Types of reading
Courtney	4 weeks	5	15 books	4 children's books 1 graded reader
Grace	5 weeks	2	50 books	1 online article 1 manga book
Felicia	4 weeks	18	30 books	8 children's books 10 graded readers
Hazel	5 weeks	12	40 books	4 online articles 2 graded readers 3 children's books 2 manga books
Henry	8 weeks	47	70 books	10 children's books 37 graded readers

Table 4: Summary of Reading Project.

The number of readings received is only for physical books and does not include online articles. Only two participants read online article(s), while the others did not. Most of those who did not read online articles did not even think about reading them. Everyone read both authentic readings and graded readings (including online articles). Although whether or not all participants thoroughly checked what they had as potential reading materials was not clear, no one read textbook type readings (Reading textbooks for L2 readers). Moreover, no one used the audio CD attached to the graded readers. On the other hand, Grace used the audio function for the online article she read.

Each participant varied in terms of how s/he approached the readings materials. The most common behavior during reading was the use of dictionary. Grace, Felicia, Hazel, and Henry used dictionaries while they read, although there were differences in

the extent to which they used dictionaries. Some participants only looked up a few words simply because they knew the meaning of the rest. Others used dictionaries more because they did not like ambiguity and did not want to let go of learning opportunities. Moreover, most participants ignored the ER tips that I explained when they received the readings. As mentioned, most of the participants used dictionaries and did not appear to refrain from using them. Some participants also did not pay attention to the reading levels. Courtney only received Level 0 and 1 readings, but she started from Level 1 without concerning herself much about the reading levels. Grace picked up a Level 4 book for her selection just because she wanted to read graphic novels. Although he mostly followed the level guide, Henry did not initially notice that there were lower-level readings available. All the participants had a grasp of what they understood and what they did not in the readings. However, only three participants (Felicia, Hazel, and Henry) planned what they would read during the project, although they did not necessarily achieve their goal to read a certain number of books.

Everyone who participated in this project liked the reading project itself. However, there was variation in the degree of enthusiasm. While most of the participants wanted to continue to read after the reading project if they had a chance, Courtney did not sound very positive about continuing. Further, overall, the five participants preferred authentic readings to graded readers, but it also depended on the topics they read. For example, Henry preferred the history and biography genres to the children's books. Since he only had a chance to read children's books but not history/biography in authentic materials, he did not say that he preferred authentic materials. Hazel liked the manga she read; however, she did not necessarily like the children's books she read. Additionally, most of the participants seemed to appreciate the phonetic guides (furigana) to kanji and

katakana. On the contrary, Grace and Henry were also aware of the drawbacks of having furigana.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

To reiterate the purpose of the present research, this study was conducted to investigate how motivated JFL learners approach their learning in general and how specifically technology and reading support their learning in SDL settings. To do this, I posed the following research questions:

1. What roles do technology and reading play in JFL learners' self-directed learning?

   a. How do JFL learners approach their self-directed learning in regards to technology and reading?

   b. How do JFL learners demonstrate confidence and/or lack of confidence during self-directed learning in terms of the use of technology and reading?

   c. How do reading and technology support JFL learner's self-directed learning?

2. What happens when JFL learners receive both paper- and web-based extensive reading materials for their self-directed learning?

   a. To what degree and in what ways are these learners motivated to read the materials?

   b. How do these learners approach these readings?

   c. How do these learners feel about using these readings for their self-directed learning?

To answer the research questions above, I collected data from five JFL learners who were willing to learn, who were currently learning, or who used to learn Japanese in SDL settings. Given the various backgrounds that these participants had as well as the availability of participants, the case-study approach was adopted. I collected interview data, observation data, and journal entries for analysis. Participants' own learning materials were also used to identify what they were studying and how the participants

were learning Japanese. The previous chapter summarized these collected data and reported the highlights. In this chapter, the collected data are analyzed alongside the research questions.

1. What Roles Do Technology and Reading Play in JFL Learners' Self-Directed Learning?

1. How Do JFL Learners Approach Their Self-Directed Learning in Regards to Technology and Reading?

To answer this question, I mostly used online survey and interview data. Moreover, as Felicia sometimes compared her learning experience during the reading project to her experience prior to participation, some of her comments in her journal entries helped me answer this question as well. This section consists of two subsections: technology and reading.

Technology

The data indicated that all participants used some kind of technology for Japanese learning. All participants used technology to access information, while most of them did not engage in Web 2.0-based tools / services such as blogs and SNSs for their SDL. Some participants used apps for their SDL as well.

Each participant used technology differently for his / her SDL. Courtney used the Internet for looking up the meanings of words on Tangorin, for googling grammar concepts, and for finding apps as learning resources to learn Japanese characters. She also accessed Meetup to find a friend who can teach her Japanese. Grace used her electronic dictionary to check the meanings of words. She listened to Japanese-learning podcasts during her commutes. Felicia watched Japanese cultural shows on YouTube to learn

about Japanese food. Hazel used Quizlet for her vocabulary learning and jisho.org to check unfamiliar words. She also looked for information about her favorite games in Japanese. Henry mainly watched Japan TV, but he also watched Japanese shows on YouTube. When he needed to look up words, he used several online dictionaries. He also used apps to learn kanji very occasionally. Thus, participants used technology mainly for information seeking and learning resources.

On the other hand, nobody used technology to share information with the public, such as through a blog or SNS. Courtney was the only one who explicitly expressed her interest in a language-learning SNS, and Felicia passively admitted the benefits of social aspects of the Internet. In contrast, Grace and Henry displayed negative attitudes towards language-learning SNSs. Grace, in particular, was not necessarily against the concept of SNSs themselves; however, she emphasized the benefits of meeting native speakers (i.e., a tutor in her case) in person. She thought that the Internet makes face-to-face distance learning possible, but it is not an ideal way to learn; she would do it if there were absolutely no alternative way to learn Japanese.

Although Web 2.0 technologies such as SNSs have been around for over a decade and the use of SNSs (e.g., Facebook) has been common across generations, the potential benefits of learning via SNS may not be well accepted by learners. There has been research about the potential of using Web 2.0 tools in education. For example, Rollett, Strohmaier, Dosinger, and Tochtermann (2007) claimed that Web 2.0 tools in general have the benefit of knowledge transfer. Similarly, Selwyn (2007) also expressed that SNSs such as Facebook can enable learners to build communities and collaborate. In language learning particularly, Blattner and Fiori (2011) argued that Facebook groups provide L2 learners with the opportunity to access authentic input. Liu et al. (2015) found that L2 learners may like SNSs specifically for language learning, as they can get

feedback from native speakers, despite several potential usability issues. However, L2 learners are not necessarily aware of these potential benefits. In Bicen and Uzunboylu's (2013) research, participating educators realized the benefits of using Facebook for learning only after they participated in the research; rather, prior to their participation in the research, they had negative perceptions of Facebook. Although the results of Bicen and Uzunboylu's study may not be directly related, L2 learners may feel a similar way. In this study, the participants did not explicitly say so; however, they implied that they had not tried to use SNSs for learning Japanese and expressed their impressions either positively or negatively about the use of SNSs for language learning.

Additionally, even if learners may know of such benefits, there can be several reasons for learners to refrain from using Web 2.0 tools for their language learning. Such reasons can be contextual, such as individual preference, generational difference, life constraints, etc., or a combination of any of the above. In this research, as mentioned above, only Courtney, who appeared to be very socially oriented, was explicitly interested in using an SNS. It is intriguing that most participants did not want to use an SNS to learn Japanese, although language learning involves learning about a distant country and its language, and the use of an SNS, thanks to its networking function, can make it easier for language learners to connect to the target culture and language. Yet, such participants' attitudes may change once they try out an SNS for language learning, as Bicen and Uzunboylu's (2013) research suggested.

Another technology-related finding is the limited use of apps. Among the participants, only Courtney and Henry used apps to learn Japanese when they initially participated in this research. These apps are not meant for learning other concepts but only for practicing characters (kana and kanji). Grace and Hazel did not have apps to use, as they could not find good ones. Felicia was the only one who did not like to use

technology much for her Japanese learning, although she found a dictionary app that she liked during the reading project. From what the participants did for their SDL as well as what they said in the interviews, it can be assumed that apps for Japanese learning are still underdeveloped. As Grace pointed out, there seems to be only apps that are for elementary level learners or special purposes (e.g., learning kanji, dictionary) available for the Japanese language. Hazel mentioned that she used Duolingo, a well-known, free, reliable app for language learning (Duffy, 2015), for her Spanish learning. However, the app does not offer Japanese as of July 2016. Most of the Japanese-learning apps were developed by individual app developers, which may prevent potential users from using them due to possible unreliability. If reputed apps like Duolingo start to offer Japanese, there may be more learners who will use apps to learn Japanese.

Thus, based on the data obtained from online survey responses, first interviews, and learning observation sessions, most participants were in favor of using technology in their SDL of Japanese, and everyone used technology to some extent as well as recognized its importance in their learning. However, their satisfaction level in using technology for Japanese learning was not necessarily high. Fundamentally, Japanese learning resources are lacking on the Internet. The participants also did not necessarily know where to look or what to look for. They may not have had access to more well-known or reliable technologies. Additionally, the authentic materials online tended to be too difficult for them. It would probably be nice if there were more reliable online learning resources, such as resources developed by schools, lecturers, publishing companies, or well-known companies in the language-learning field, available to self-directed learners of Japanese.

Reading

Prior to the study, most of the participants did not read during their SDL, despite acknowledging the importance of reading in their learning. At the same time, they also addressed concerns about reading in Japanese for their learning, mainly related to kanji. Among the five participants, only Henry actively read to learn Japanese; he read semi-authentic newspaper articles (authentic newspaper articles with English translations on the side) printed in books. Other participants varied in their amount of reading. Courtney and Felicia did not really read other than for their classes, although Felicia was studying kanji in order to be able to read later on. Grace read whenever readings appeared in her textbooks, but otherwise she did not read. Hazel did functional readings out of necessity (e.g., read conversations in Japanese games, read Japanese websites to look for information about games, etc.), but she did not read in order to learn Japanese.

In the interviews, only Felicia and Grace specifically acknowledged that reading is the skill that they would want to work on most. Yet, there was a difference between these two participants. Felicia said that reading was important, and she was learning kanji in the hope of reading on her own later. On the other hand, Grace said that reading and writing would be the skills that she would want to work on most because her speaking and listening skills outperform her writing and reading skills. She wanted to balance the four skills rather than specifically improve her reading skill.

Henry also said that he would like to improve his overall Japanese proficiency, which includes reading. In the interview, he sounded like he tried whatever strategy he found to be effective. Although he did not state this explicitly, it can be assumed that reading was something he could do by himself without a specific time commitment that might disturb his work. In this regard, Felicia and Henry were also different. Thus, it appears that Felicia was the only one who was trying hard to improve reading skills.

Although reading a large amount is considered to be helpful for overall L2 proficiency improvement (Renandya, Rajan, & Jacobs, 1999; Day & Bamford, 2002; Yamashita, 2008), L2 learners are not necessarily aware of such benefits and not every L2 learner wants to engage in reading, especially when the target language uses different orthographies. Alternatively, reading may be a skill that L2 learners believe to be irrelevant to what they want to do with the language. In this research, there were discrepancies between participants and the reasons behind these differences varied participant to participant. Some participants did not care for reading compared to others, as they thought reading was not an important skill for them. As Mori (2002) suggested, external utility value is an important subcomponent for reading motivation.

These participants' decisions to eschew reading while learning Japanese can also be explained by Garrison's (1997) model of SDL. When learners decide whether or not to participate in a task, they need to have a certain degree of entering motivation. This type of motivation is affected by valence (i.e., personal needs and affective state) and expectancy (i.e., personal characteristics and contextual characteristics). Most of the participants' valence was low, as they stated that reading was either not relevant to what they wanted to do with Japanese or very challenging mainly due to kanji, or a combination of both. Moreover, their expectancy, again due to kanji, was not high. More specifically, Grace was not required to read despite her willingness to improve her reading skills. She was also aware of challenging aspects of kanji as well as her problem with katakana. Even though Felicia's personal need was high and she was willing to read Japanese texts, her perception of lack of competency in kanji and reading difficulty prevented her from directly reading Japanese texts. Rather, she started with kanji learning. Further, Courtney and Hazel already had reading practice in their college classes; this contextual factor probably decreased the necessity of reading in their SDL.

For these JFL learners, it was thus not reasonable to read in Japanese for their SDL, with the exception of Henry.

Henry's case was different from other participants'. Because he once knew many kanji, he did not necessarily have negative feeling towards reading. According to Garrison's (1997) model, once Henry started reading, his task motivation, which is influenced by volition, was a more important factor to continue his reading. As his Japanese learning was well integrated into his daily life and became a daily routine, it is reasonable to conclude that it was not difficult for him to maintain his volition to read in Japanese.

Another way to look at participants' reading in their SDL is to use Kondo-Brown's (2006) research. Kondo-Brown found that only L2 Japanese learners who are intrinsically motivated to read in Japanese would actually read in Japanese. Since Felicia was the only one who seemed to be intrinsically motivated to read in Japanese, she was at least volitionally learning kanji for future reading. On the other hand, Grace was not necessarily intrinsically interested in reading in Japanese even though she was interested in reading in general. Hence, she was fine reading in Japanese when necessary, but she did not try to seek out more opportunities to read in Japanese. This is somewhat related to the research by Takase (2007). In her research, Japanese high school students who liked to read in Japanese did not necessarily like to read in English. Similarly, the students who liked to read in English did not necessarily like to read in Japanese. As Takase's research suggested, reading in L1 and L2 are not correlated in terms of enjoyment, and this was the case with the five JFL learners in this study.

Henry's case was intriguing to analyze alongside Kondo-Brown's (2006) findings. Like Grace, Henry was not necessarily interested in reading in Japanese. However, he was reading Japanese articles in books voluntarily. This was largely because

he knew reading was helpful for exposure to more kanji in context. In other words, he had a specific purpose to learn Japanese, but this aspect might have not been included in Kondo-Brown's research, as the research focused on ER in Japanese in general; the participants' reasons for learning Japanese in Kondo-Brown's research were undetermined. Additionally, in Kondo-Brown's research, L2 Japanese learners who had stronger kanji knowledge were more confident in reading Japanese. Since Henry knew many kanji at least once in the past, he did not have a negative feeling towards kanji compared to the other three participants (Courtney, Grace, and Felicia) who feared kanji, even though he mentioned that kanji is a challenging aspect of Japanese reading. Hence, even though he did not necessarily have IM in reading in Japanese, he was still willing to read. Kondo-Brown's study concluded that only L2 learners who are intrinsically motivated to read in Japanese would be more likely to read; however, in her research, there were still some rare exceptions who were willing to read in Japanese without substantial IM for reading in Japanese. Perhaps, Henry was one such learner.

Other possible interpretations are derived from the fact that Henry had a closer association with Japan and the Japanese community compared to other participants. His parents spent a lot of time in Japan during the year, and he also visited Japan often. He also intended to move to Japan at least for several years in the near future. Thus, although Henry still learned Japanese in the United States and he did not use Japanese with his parents, it can be assumed that Henry was learning Japanese as a second language rather than a foreign language. This posits a slightly different contextual influence on his SDL. Additionally, because of his close association with the community, he probably had higher integrativeness (or Ideal L2 Self), which is the single most important factor for selecting a language to learn and putting effort into the language in Csizér and Dörnyei's

(2005) model. Although he did not necessarily have an interest in reading itself, he would still try hard to learn Japanese, including reading in the language.

Moreover, it is also worthwhile to point out that it is simply difficult for self-directed learners of Japanese to obtain Japanese reading resources. Most participants thought that there were not enough Japanese readings available to them. There are several reasons for this perception. First, the lack of knowledge in kanji keeps JFL learners away from authentic readings. In Japanese authentic readings, kanji characters are used whenever possible and appropriate, and phonetic guides to kanji are mostly not provided. L2 Japanese learners, therefore, may not be able to check the meanings of the unfamiliar kanji, as they do not know the pronunciations of the unfamiliar kanji. From their perspective, it is almost impossible to check the meaning of new kanji words and therefore to read authentic Japanese readings, especially printed books. As Nation (2006) pointed out, readers need to know 98% of the vocabulary in the content to read comfortably, whereas typical Japanese texts contain about 30% kanji (Harada, 2008). L2 learners do not have to read comfortably since they are learning to read; they expect to encounter several unfamiliar words in readings. Yet, it can easily be assumed that it would be very hard for English-speaking JFL readers to read authentic readings, especially when they do not know how to pronounce the vocabulary and will likely have difficulty in looking up the meaning in a dictionary. Thus, the level of difficulty in Japanese authentic readings is probably too difficult for many L2 Japanese readers, even with the Internet readings. This is especially the case as some people like Grace perhaps never thought of googling unfamiliar kanji, which could give them the pronunciation of the character and its meaning. In other words, some L2 Japanese learners may need to explicitly learn Internet skills for Japanese learning.

Furthermore, the lack of knowledge about available resources may isolate self-directed learners and limit their access to authentic Japanese readings. There are three aspects to this lack of knowledge. First, as Courtney indicated, some JFL readers do not know what is popular. Some learners may know famous Japanese novelists, such as Murakami Haruki and Yoshimoto Banana, but their novels are too challenging due to kanji. Children's books or readings for young Japanese readers can be an option, but Japanese children's books are not widely known to the learners, and the learners may not think of using these materials as their learning resources as Felicia indicated in her journal entry. Second, the learners may not know what is suitable for their level, as Grace pointed out. The material they purchase may be too easy, too difficult, too boring, or irrelevant. The learners may not want to invest time and money in something that they are uncertain about for learning gains. Third, the learners, especially self-directed learners, may not know where to look for materials, unless they have Japanese acquaintances to ask how to obtain Japanese books or how to choose which websites to look at. They can still google these resources, but the Internet may give them too much information to decide which reading resource is best. In Henry's case, since he frequently visited Japan to look for more materials to read, had a lengthy experience learning Japanese, and had both willingness and funds to invest in Japanese learning materials, he could find some reading materials that satisfied him. Still, he said that he had hits and misses.

All of the above may prevent JFL learners from developing a willingness to read and may even decrease their interest in reading-skill improvement. If there were more authentic reading resources specially created for young Japanese readers and L2 Japanese learners (e.g., NHK EasyWeb) and if they were advertised well, so that they know that there are such readings available to them, self-directed learners of Japanese may have a greater interest in improving their reading skills.

b. How Do JFL Learners Demonstrate Confidence and/or Lack of Confidence during Self-Directed Learning in Terms of the Use of Technology and Reading?

I only used interview data to answer this question. The answer to this research question is closely related to the answer to the previous one (Research Question 1, a). Overall, the participants in this research displayed confidence, although not necessarily to a great extent, using technology in Japanese learning. According to their needs, they utilized online dictionaries, general search engines, YouTube videos, etc. From the interviews, one can tell that the participants were fine with what they were doing now and not necessarily actively exploring more options with technology.

Moreover, self-perceived confidence does not necessarily equal one's actual capability to utilize technology. Self-directed L2 learners do not necessarily know how to search effectively for authentic Japanese content. Additionally, their knowledge in terms of the reliability of each website or app can be limited. Since knowledge is likely built on prior knowledge (Fischer & Scharff, 1998), self-directed learners, especially the ones without any social support from more knowledgeable others, may not ever have opportunities to get to know and try out newly available technology sources for language learning. Additionally, a language-specific issue may be involved as well. Unlike other European languages that use Roman alphabets, Japanese learners need to learn how to use Japanese on their computers and cell phones. If Japanese learners just rely on typing in English to look up more information about Japanese, then they may have fewer opportunities to try out more technology-related resources.

Smartphone apps posed different challenges compared to general technology use. Although using the apps themselves was no problem for the participants who used them, finding apps that are worth using was a challenging aspect to the participants. As mentioned before, apps for Japanese language learning seem to be still underdeveloped

compared to those for European languages. Failure to find good apps may have led the participants to feel less confident in technology use.

With respect to reading, the participants did not show a lack of confidence about reading itself. However, most participants were not confident with kanji. If they used learning materials that were specifically targeted to L2 Japanese learners (e.g., textbooks), then they would have few problems. Because such materials have phonetic guides to unfamiliar kanji words, they may not need to look up the kanji words in dictionaries. However, when it comes to authentic materials or whatever is available online without phonetic guides to kanji, the participants did not have confidence in reading the content. This finding corresponds to Kondo-Brown's (2006) findings in that kanji knowledge and self-perceived reading confidence correlate. This is also related to the lack of confidence in finding appropriate reading materials for learners' levels. Even if there are no kanji phonetic guides, if the levels of readings are matched with the learners' levels, then learners may feel more confident. However, JFL learners often do not know how to find such reading resources.

c. How Do Reading and Technology Support JFL Learner's Self-Directed Learning?

I used online survey responses and data from the first interview and observation sessions to answer this question.

Technology

In the interviews, the participants revealed the importance of technology in their SDL. As mentioned above, all participants used technology in accessing Japanese. Many of them used online dictionaries and Google Translations. Some accessed YouTube to watch Japanese shows. Grace used podcasts to learn Japanese, and Hazel looked up

information about her favorite game on Japanese websites. Henry watched a cable TV show every day for cultural information as well as learning.

The only participant who did not agree with the importance of technology was Felicia. She watched Japanese anime with her husband as well as a YouTube show called *Cooking with Dog*, which is about cooking Japanese food. Felicia did not use these videos for her Japanese learning, although she could implicitly learn new cultural concepts and vocabulary. For her SDL, she exclusively used textbooks.

Thus, technology provides resources for learning and Japanese culture, as well as convenience and access to such resources. In particular, the Internet can provide a rich amount of cultural information about Japan. Not only for the Japanese language learning, but also for foreign language learning in general, the benefits that the Internet can provide are evident (Singhal, 1997; Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

Moreover, with resources such as dictionaries, technology can also facilitate SDL. It appears that, when it comes to learners' levels, the importance of technology changes. In Felicia's case, she was still an elementary-level learner, so textbooks were sufficient for her learning; she had something to learn from them as long as she could take the time to sit down with her textbooks. Further, the importance of technology changes according to learners' preferences. For example, in Grace's case, podcasts fit her learning well since she could listen to them while commuting in addition to using textbooks and meeting her tutor. In Henry's case, by watching TV, he could obtain real-time authentic cultural input.

Some of the learning materials the participants had selected via technology for their SDL seemed to fit Garrison's (1997) SDL model, mostly along with personal needs and contextual constraints. In Grace's case, because she wanted to utilize her commuting time for her SDL, she found the podcast useful and continued to use it (contextual). In Henry's case, it can be assumed that obtaining more current information about Japan was

part of his personal need because of his plan to move to Japan. Most participants also used online and / or electronic dictionaries based on their needs.

Thus, technology has features that may support continuous SDL of the Japanese language. However, one point that needs to be noted is that technology itself is not a learning material or resource about Japanese. Rather technology provides a mechanism for developing and distributing materials and resources in a way that is helpful for JFL learners. The factors that could support SDL are learner autonomy as well as components related to learner autonomy such as self-regulated learning strategies (Victri & Lockhart, 1995; Zimmerman, 2002) and motivation (Dickinson, 1995). These factors can be embedded in technology. For example, by providing more learning resources, technology can create an environment where learners can work on their own. Moreover, there may be resources that increase learners' IM by connecting to their personal interests, such as cooking or gaming. Further, some websites and apps may have a progress tracking function, which helps learner to self-regulate their learning. Hence, technology itself does not necessarily increase learner autonomy, but technology can definitely support it.

Reading

On the contrary, reading did not seem to be important to many participants largely due to the difficulty of kanji as well as scarcity of reading resources. The only participant who considered reading as truly important was Felicia. For her in particular, reading was a component in her SDL that maintained her IM in Japanese learning. However, what she was learning was kanji, and kanji did not necessarily affect or maintain her motivation. Applying Garrison's (1997) model here, she had high entering motivation to initiate the task of learning kanji and could continue the task until she had her son, which greatly changed her learning context and prevented her from continuing her studies for a while.

One finding that is interesting to note is the lack of self-regulated strategies incorporated in participants' SDL. In Zimmerman's (2002) model, self-regulated learners utilize different strategies to maximize learning benefits in forethought, performance, and self-reflection phases. Although the participants displayed a high level of motivation in terms of learning Japanese as well as the uses of cognitive strategies during observation sessions, they did not really do much during self-reflection phases. Felicia and Hazel explicitly mentioned that they did not track or reflect on their learning progresses. Although Courtney and Grace occasionally looked back on what they had done, they did not necessarily "reflect on" their learning experience. Courtney just looked back to her successes in the past to improve her motivation. Grace only referred to her earlier notes about the Japanese language besides writing dates. Moreover, although Henry did not mention this explicitly, he did not seem to reflect on his learning. As it was necessary for the participants to utilize self-regulated strategies for successful SDL, the participants in this study needed to work on the self-reflection phase in order to be successful in their SDL.

However, it was unclear whether or not technology and/or reading supported the participants in regards to self-regulated strategies based on the collected data. As mentioned above, some learning apps can provide tracking functions that may help learners track learning progress, which also help learners unconsciously reflect on their learning experience. Yet, deliberate implementation of the self-regulated strategies is necessary for more successful SDL.

Summary of Research Question 1

To summarize the findings related to Research Question 1, whereas technology plays a large role in the learning of self-directed JFL learners, reading may not.

Compared to the limited number of materials and potential cost of reading in print, technology provides a greater variety of materials at lower cost. As technology such as the Internet integrates into our everyday life, it is also natural for JFL learners to utilize technology in their learning. Yet, in this study, other than providing ways to access resources, it is still unclear if technology supported JFL learners in terms of self-regulated strategies. It may be beneficial for JFL learners to have more functions to enable them to self-reflect their learning. On the other hand, reading was more likely avoided by the learners despite the abundance of resources available on the Internet and the benefits of reading. The main reason for this avoidance is kanji, and kanji also caused a lack of confidence in participants' SDL. If self-directed JFL learners effectively improve their reading skills quickly, they may enjoy reading on authentic Japanese websites, which can provide linguistic benefits as well as cultural knowledge.

2. What Happens When JFL Learners Receive Both Paper- and Web-Based Extensive Reading Materials for their Self-Directed Learning?

a. To What Degree and in What Ways are These Learners Motivated to Read the Materials?

I used the data from the second interviews and journal entries to answer this question. All participants displayed motivation to read the received readings to some extent. In other words, all participants had some degree of entering motivation that was sufficient to participate in this reading project. However, the degree to which they were motivated varied considerably. Courtney read the readings regularly, one book per week. Grace enjoyed her reading and wanted to read more, but she did not actually have many opportunities to read. Felicia was very excited to read and attempted to read more and more over the course of the project. Hazel's motivation fluctuated. She first started out with graded readers and did not like them much. Later in the project, she found a book

she liked, so she kept reading it for hours. Henry read a lot throughout his project time and seemed to maintain his motivation.

Because the data collected for this research were qualitative data (i.e., interviews, diary entries, and observations), it is impossible to quantify how much each participant was motivated to read the received readings and to compare the participants' motivation. Yet, each participant's motivation could be comparable qualitatively, such as the type of motivation that each participant displayed.

Self-Determination Theory

One theory that can be applicable is intrinsic-extrinsic motivation dichotomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Applying Deci and Ryan's intrinsic-extrinsic motivation dichotomy to the participants' motivation in the present research, overall, it can be assumed that the participants had a mixture of IM and EM but exhibited more EM rather than IM towards reading in Japanese.

In Courtney's case, despite the fact that she had a strong initial interest in reading Japanese children's books, the reading experience did not enhance her interest. She regularly read one book per week but did not read any further. When she selected books, she selected them based on the illustrations of the books. This can mean that although she had an interest in the books themselves that she had selected, she did not have IM in Japanese reading itself. Her perception towards reading in Japanese had become more positive compared to before the reading project, when she feared reading, especially kanji; however, it did not necessarily become a strong drive to seek out more opportunities to read during her reading project. Additionally, she read the last book based on my suggestion, not her own. One can argue that Courtney had more EM than IM because she seemed to feel obliged to read. Using Deci and Ryan's model, Courtney's

motivational orientation can be between Introjection and Identification in EM. However, Courtney's EM could be different from the EM that heritage learners usually have, feeling obliged to learn the heritage language (Conamaru & Noels, 2009). As this reading project was task-based rather than learning a language overall, it is difficult to exactly know how Courtney felt about learning Japanese itself. Yet, given that Courtney was a heritage learner, her lack of contact with the Japanese community might have lowered her motivation (Noels, 2005).

While Grace only read one online article and part of a book, she reported that she also liked both of the readings. She did not seem to feel forced to read, as she did not read at all when she was busy with work. In other words, she had done what she could do for the reading project, but she did not try hard to read further. Instead of reading further, she actually went back to her own learning materials and found a renewed interest in the website she had used earlier. It is still unclear if she had true intrinsic motivation in the activity of reading in Japanese itself. At the same time, even though she did not display identifiable extrinsic motivation, Grace might have had external regulation as well, since the reading project had a limited length, which could create external regulation for all participants anyways to some extent.

Felicia showed her IM in Japanese reading before starting her reading project. Throughout the project, she attempted to seek more opportunities to read Japanese books. Additionally, even though she did not enjoy some of the books she read, such negative experiences did not slow her reading. She also searched for information about ER. It is rather obvious that she retained her IM throughout the project. On the other hand, she also had an external influence. She mentioned that, even though she wanted to read *Panya no Kumasan* (The Bear at the Bakery), she did so at the very end of the reading project, and it sounded like she read the book because she needed to return the book to

me. Her action can be interpreted as external regulation for reading this particular book, but overall, she still had IM throughout.

On the other hand, Hazel felt obliged to read books for the first two weeks of her reading project. While she was aware of benefits of reading graded readers/online articles for her Japanese learning, this feeling of obligation was EM. With the Deci and Ryan's model, Hazel probably had external regulation (for limited project time), Introjection (for feeling obliged to read) and Identification (for valuing the reading project) EM. For the second half of her reading project, Hazel read a book called *Atashinchi* (My Home). She definitely had an interest in reading this book. While she did not search beyond the book she had, she mentioned that she might look for more books / readings in local libraries or second-hand bookstores. Although this can be interpreted as IM, one can still argue that it could be just book-based interests and not necessarily the IM in reading in Japanese that Kondo-Brown (2006) explained.

Henry's motivational orientation was a little difficult to analyze. First, at the beginning of the project, he decided to finish all the books that he had received. This seems to be a mixture of internal and external drive. He came up with this goal on his own, which was his internal drive. However, finishing up all the books itself is not necessarily an internal drive. Since Henry had a chance to read the books provided by an external source (researcher), he decided to read them. It was not based on his IM for Japanese reading itself. Throughout the project, he gained more confidence in reading in Japanese, but it was not necessarily the case that he also became more interested in reading in Japanese. With Deci and Ryan's model, using the limited time to complete reading can be interpreted as external regulation. At the same time, Henry perhaps had Identification and/or Integration EM and potentially IM. Unlike Courtney, he had contact

with the Japanese community; he might have had more motivational support from the community compared to Courtney.

In sum, it can be assumed that everyone had a combination of motivational orientations but the degree to which EM or IM was stronger differed by participant. Additionally, each participant displayed different types of EM. As this research did not intend to measure participants' motivational orientations, my interpretations could be wrong. Moreover, Deci and Ryan's dichotomy is normally applied to language learning in general and not specifically to reading. Hence, participants' task-based motivation is not necessarily identical to their motivation in learning Japanese itself. Yet, the most noteworthy takeaway from here was that, although one book might be interesting for JFL learners, it did not necessarily trigger subsequent reading. Readers' interest in reading was confined to a particular book and did not become an interest in reading in Japanese more generally, which is an important element to become an avid reader of Japanese texts (Kondo-Brown, 2006).

L2 Motivational Self System

Another theory that can be applied to analyze participants' motivation is Dörnyei's (2009) L2MSS. This theory suggests that the Ideal L2 Self affects L2 learners' current motivational status (Csizér & Magid, 2014). In this research, an L2MSS survey was not implemented for data collection. Instead, each participant was asked about his or her learning goals during the interviews. Even though goals and the Ideal L2 self are not necessarily identical, the Ideal L2 self can still be guessable to some extent.

Courtney stated that her goal was to learn about Japanese culture through the language to understand more about her heritage and support colleagues who have a Japanese background at a Japanese-related company. Hence, her focus on culture does

not necessarily drive her to put effort into language improvement itself. During the reading project, the books she selected was not necessarily useful for cultural learning. Hence, it can be assumed that she did not put great effort into reading more even though she still enjoyed the books.

Grace's goal was not concrete. She mentioned that her current mission was to maintain her current level, which is not an ultimate goal. She also wondered if she could move back to Japan one day to live. Yet, this was not a definite goal but rather one of the possible options. Even though she mentioned that reading was the skill she would want to work on most, it might not be necessary for her to be fluent in reading to achieve her not-so-concrete-goal. She maintained her routine, but the new reading materials did not change her routine work.

Felicia explicitly mentioned that she did not have a concrete goal, as she was not expecting to visit Japan anytime in the near future. However, since she had a vague goal that she would like to continue to learn Japanese with available reading materials, it was understandable that she was very motivated in her reading project in addition to the fact that she was a literature scholar.

Hazel had a specific goal compared to the others: working for a Japanese gaming company as a translator, and she said that it would be her "dream job." Since reading was relevant to her future goal, she tried hard to make the project fun. Although her motivation fluctuated, one can say that it was due to the graded readers / online articles that she had selected to read. They were rather boring to her, either content wise or in terms of writing style, which decreased her motivation to read for a while.

Henry's goal was ultimate fluency in the Japanese language. However, he was also planning to move to Japan in the next several years. For Henry, reading was equally relevant to the other skills to work on. Although he externally set a short-term goal that

he would finish all the readings, he was able to maintain his motivation throughout the project.

In summary, if the participant's goal or suggested Ideal L2 Self is not relevant to reading, then the participant's motivation to read may be lower than when it is relevant. However, it should be noted that everybody's learning context was different, which appeared to have a strong influence on participants' motivation as well. For example, Courtney did not really have opportunities to engage in self-directed learning after she learned hiragana / katakana with apps. In addition to the classroom learning that she had been struggling with, it might have been challenging for her to incorporate additional learning. On the other hand, since Henry had been learning Japanese for a very long time and he seemed to be used to reading in Japanese more than anybody else in this research, incorporating reading materials for his learning might have been easier in addition to high motivation. Context is also one of the crucial decision-making factors for entering motivation in Garrison's (1997) model. As participants did not carry over their motivation to the following readings, it can reasonably be assumed that the participants had entering motivation for each reading they engaged in rather than the entire reading project as a set of SDL.

Mori's Reading Motivation Framework

Lastly, Mori's (2002) framework can also be applied specifically to reading motivation. In Mori's framework, there are four subcomponents in reading motivation: intrinsic value of reading, attainment value of reading, extrinsic utility value of reading, and expectancy for success in reading. As Courtney, Grace, and Felicia mentioned their excitements in the first interviews, it can be assumed that they saw the intrinsic value of reading. It was unclear whether or not intrinsic value of reading was high for Hazel and

Henry, as their reaction seemed to be neutral at the beginning of the reading project. Nonetheless, towards the end of the reading project, Hazel at least found intrinsic value in a book that she liked. Moreover, the reading project also had attainment value for Felicia and Henry. For Felicia, as she noted that reading was important for her SDL, her attainment value of reading was high. For Henry, because he needed to improve overall Japanese skills, his attainment value was also high. All the participants probably had extrinsic utility value although the degree probably varied. Finally, perhaps no one had expectancy for success in reading, as the participants did not know about ER. However, as they continued the reading project, perhaps their expectancy for success positively increased.

b. How Do These Learners Approach These Readings?

I used the second interview data, second observation sessions, and journal entries to answer this question. As reported in the previous chapter, each participant approached the readings differently. Although I did not typically intervene in the participants' selection of the readings, I once asked Courtney to read a graded reader rather than children's books. As I was reading Courtney's journal entries, I thought that graded readers might be helpful for her learning. Other than this, all activities related to the readings were done due to participants' own choices.

Most participants did not go beyond what they had been doing for their own learning. On the other hand, Felicia explored more options to maximize her learning experience. Specifically, she found an app to look up vocabulary and a website to learn more about ER. Although what she did was on her own volition, it would be difficult to say this was a completely internal decision. In the second interview, when Felicia was asked if the research purposes affected her decision to search for an app in any way, she

admitted that they did affect her. Yet, I did not suggest that she look up more information about ER; it was briefly mentioned when I was explaining about tips to approach the given readings. Hence, Felicia's decision to seek out more information about ER was more likely derived from her own curiosity rather than an external influence. Rather, she was very much like a self-regulated learner, who was well aware of what she needed to do and tried to seek more opportunities (Zimmerman, 1990). Additionally, based on her journal entries, it was clear that she was reflecting on her learning experience to improve her reading experience, which is one of the important self-regulated strategies (Zimmerman, 2002). As she stated that she knew that self-reflection was good for learning in general in the first interview, this reading project was just a trigger for her to become a more self-regulated learner, which led her to succeed in her reading project.

There were also several common phenomena that were observed in regards to how the participants approached the readings. These phenomena were related to ER tips suggested by Tadoku Supporters. The basic tips for ER are (1) start with easier levels, (2) try not to use a dictionary, (3) skip the parts you do not understand, and (4) stop reading if you get stumped or become bored. Some participants did not start from the easier levels among the readings that they were provided. Rather, they just started out with the books that they liked most at first sight (i.e., based on the illustrations on the book covers or the titles). Even though readings may be challenging for learners if they select the wrong level, the participants enjoyed the readings anyways. For instance, Grace obviously selected a book that did not match her level (a Level 4 authentic book); however, she read two sections of the book on two different occasions, which suggests that she wanted to continue to read the book. Even though she was a little frustrated during the first reading, her volition to continue the book was stronger, and/or she perhaps had a belief that she would be able to manage it.

Since the content of the reading is also important to continue reading, it may not be a good idea to strictly incorporate ER rules into SDL settings. Another tip to follow is the use of a dictionary. Although ER tips do not encourage readers to look up words in dictionaries, most participants used dictionaries. The frequency with which they used dictionaries varied. While it is unclear whether or not the participants used dictionaries for unnecessary searches, no one claimed negative experiences with the use of dictionaries. Even though too much unnecessary searching of words is not appropriate for ER (Suesser & Robb, 1990), self-directed learners may be able to utilize the opportunities to learn new words. In particular, if they are self-regulated learners, who take responsibility in learning, it is more natural for them to use a dictionary to ensure that they are learning. For example, Felicia mentioned that she would feel irresponsible and lose her chance to learn vocabulary if she did not look up unfamiliar words. Additionally, previous research found that L2 learners learn more words when using dictionaries than when guessing from context (Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996) or just reading (Laufer, 2003). Even though the use of dictionaries may be too frequent and not encouraged in ER practice, self-directed learners can still benefit in learning new vocabulary.

Although not explicitly written in ER tips, the tips imply that readers should continue reading without stopping. Grace could not follow this rather apparent implication. Since she had always been learning Japanese with paper and pencil, taking notes whenever she felt necessary, she carried this habit over into this project. Even though this was not recommended as successful ER, she would have felt stressed if she were not allowed to practice what she liked to do. Thus, in SDL settings where JFL learners get to do whatever they would like to, ER tips may not hold any restrictive power but just really serve as loose guidelines. However, JFL learners may apply their

preferred strategies to tackle the readings. This may happen especially when they strongly believe that the strategies work based on their prior experience. In the case of Grace, she firmly believed that pen and pencils had helped her learning greatly. Nonetheless, the use of other strategies that contradict ER tips is not necessarily bad, as it may positively affect their learning, in terms of both language proficiency and motivation.

c. How Do These Learners Feel about Using These Readings for Their Self-Directed Learning?

I used the second interview data, second observation sessions, and journal entries to answer this question. Overall, all the participants had positive feelings towards the received readings. They all mentioned that the readings would be helpful for their SDL of Japanese. However, their feelings changed over the course of the reading project based on different factors. Specifically, based on the interviews and journal entries, it can be assumed that these factors were: (1) the readings, (2) each reading or material type, (3) surrounding context, and (4) myself.

First, the participants had mostly positive attitudes towards the readings when they received them. Courtney, Grace and Felicia explicitly mentioned their excitement towards the reading project itself. Hence, it can be assumed that they had initially positive feelings about the readings as well. On the other hand, Hazel and Henry were rather neutral about the project itself and therefore not necessarily very excited about the readings as well. This difference in initial feelings (or entering motivation) might have affected which book they started with, as well as how and when they selected the first book.

Second, as mentioned above, participants preferred some readings to others. Each reading had a different influence on participants' feelings; yet, most participants did not

seem to carry over their feelings, whether positive or negative, towards the subsequent readings. Hazel, in contrast, started to have a negative feeling towards the reading project as well, since she did not enjoy the readings much for the first two weeks. Although Grace did not read any graded readers during her project time, she read one during the second observation. At that time, although she enjoyed the reading, she also mentioned that the phonetic guide was too small to read without a magnifier. Due to this issue, Grace might have preferred another type of reading. Similarly, Felicia preferred books rather than online articles, even though she did not read any online articles. It seemed that she had more volition to continue reading books and had lower entering motivation to begin a new type of reading (online articles).

Third, the surrounding context might have influenced the participants' feelings towards the received readings. Felicia, because she was the mother of a baby, could have a positive attitude toward children's books, whereas some of the participants were not necessarily fans of children's books. She also had an experience of reading a Japanese children's book to her son prior to the reading project. As prior knowledge and experience form personal attributes (i.e., motivation) (Song & Hill, 2007), her initial motivation might have been high in the first place. As mentioned above, Hazel's feelings about the reading project had become negative over the first two weeks. This might not have been only due to the books she had selected but also due to her substantial schoolwork. If she had not been very busy, her feelings might have not been very negative even with the graded readers, online articles, and children's books that she chose to read. Additionally, Grace had a very positive feeling towards the book she selected (*My Darling is a Foreigner*). This seemed to be partially because she knew some international couples, making the reading more interesting and relevant, whereas Hazel did not like the book at all because she was annoyed with the main character of the book.

As many models of SDL indicated (Candy, 1991; Garrison, 1997; Song & Hill, 2007), contextual factors have a crucial influence on SDL.

Fourth, I might have influenced the feelings towards the received readings as well. As mentioned, I suggested that Courtney read a graded reader towards the end of her reading project. While Courtney did not state any particular feelings when I made the suggestion, nor did she report anything noteworthy after she read the suggested graded reader, she might have unconsciously had some kind of feeling towards the reading. However, this should have been very minimal, as I just made a suggestion and did not force Courtney to read a graded reader. Plus, Courtney selected a particular graded reader upon her own preference.

Finally, it is worthwhile to point out that technology and reading together did not necessarily provide a positive influence on the participants. Three participants did not even try out NHK EastWeb online articles. If they did, they might have thought that it might be useful for their SDL just like Grace and Courtney did. However, the lack of the physical presence of the online materials when the participants felt like reading did not encourage them to read online articles. Since the participants were not really determined to read online articles, they were just satisfied with hard-copy readings. If there are ways to provide online readings to increase their sense of presence, such as delivery through an app or potentially the use of wearable technology, JFL learners may try online readings more.

Overall, each factor alone, a combination of some, or all of the above that might have influenced participants' feelings towards the received reading did not change their behavior (i.e., prevent them from reading further). All the participants concluded their reading projects with positive feelings. Many participants were willing to continue to read, and some of them said that they would look for more options to read in the future.

Since this research did not intend to follow up with the participants after the reading project, it is unclear whether or not the participants who mentioned that they would explore more opportunities actually did so.

Summary of Research Question 2

To sum up the findings for Research Question 2, one can conclude that ER materials are suitable and may be helpful for JFL learners in SDL settings. They will enjoy reading during the limited project time, if given the opportunity, and they may even seek more opportunities beyond the project time. However, self-directed JFL learners may not use the readings in a way that was believed-to-be effective as ER. Instead, they may use materials in a way that is adapted to the learners' desires; they want pleasure reading or recreational reading rather than ER. Therefore, while ER can have a promising impact on affective factors, a finding already supported by several studies (Takase, 2004; Nishino, 2007; Tabata-Sandom & Macalister, 2009), JFL learners may not improve as much in Japanese as they would hope or as other ER research claims (Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Cho & Krashen, 1994; Tse, 1996; Leung, 2002; Beglar et al., 2012). Unlike students who are taking language classes, self-directed L2 learners may not devote the same amount of time to their learning. Nishizawa, Yoshioka, and Fukada (2010) found that learners need to read at least 300,000 words to have significant learning gains from ER. Since ER requires reading "extensively," implementation of ER may be difficult in SDL settings unless L2 learners are very determined to read a lot and have specific goals related to reading.

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, JFL learners had different approaches to their SDL. Technology was used to a greater extent for a better learning experience. In contrast, they mostly avoided reading due to the perceived difficulty and irrelevance. However, they enjoyed the reading project and expressed their willingness to continue reading on their own.

It is important to distinguish the findings in terms of applicability. Specifically, some findings are applicable to foreign language learning overall, whereas others are applicable only to less commonly taught languages or to the Japanese language specifically. With respect to Research Question 1, most findings are related to less commonly taught languages, particularly Asian languages. For many English-speaking learners, these less commonly taught languages are spoken in countries that are geographically distant. Hence, technology should be an important tool to access resources. Moreover, lack of apps is also applicable to less commonly taught languages, particularly Asian languages. For example, Duolingo offers many less commonly taught languages, but it offers limited languages that have different orthographies as of 2016. The only Asian languages that are offered in Duolingo are Vietnamese, Hindi, Indonesian, and Korean, among which only Vietnamese is fully offered. Additionally, it is not very clear if the avoidance of reading is particular to Japanese or somewhat common to other languages that use different orthographies. Yet, it can be assumed that it is more likely to be applied to the Japanese context only, as Japanese is unique in terms of combinations of different types of orthographies in their writing (i.e., hiragana, katakana, and kanji) as well as variation of kanji readings, which is not observed in Chinese. These findings are not necessarily observed for EFL learners in SDL, as there are probably plenty of resources available both online and offline given that more than 10

billion people learn English (Beare, n.d.) and it has functioned for decades as a global language.

With respect to Research Question 2, most findings can probably be applicable to any foreign language. However, because English ER materials are already available and even learners have already experienced ER programs, their feelings may not be as positive as JFL or other less commonly taught language learners. Moreover, some feelings about the ER materials are very specific to the Japanese language, especially findings related to kanji (e.g., furigana).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The present study investigated how JFL learners in SDL settings approach their learning in regards to technology and reading. Additionally, it examined to what extent they are motivated, as well as how they incorporate ER materials in their SDL. The collected data and analysis indicate that, regardless of JFL learners' background, they are likely to accept ER materials for their SDL of the Japanese language. Yet, as JFL learners in SDL would not use ER materials as intended for ER and as they may have difficulty in finding materials, they would still appreciate more formal learning and social support from more knowledgeable others. Still, JFL learners should be encouraged to try out ER materials, whether or not they learn Japanese entirely in SDL settings, for more opportunities to read and confidence gaining reading experiences.

However, the present research alone cannot claim the suitability of ER for JFL learners in SDL settings, as no study is perfect. In the following sections, research limitations, pedagogical implications, and future research suggestions are discussed.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There are several research limitations in the present study. First of all, as with other case-study research, this study had only five participants. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the results of the research. The participants in this research had a wide variety of backgrounds. Some of them were students, while some were working adults; some were heritage learners; some were at beginner levels, while some were at mixed levels. Each participant had different reasons for learning Japanese and for choosing an SDL setting. Thus, it will be very likely the case that, for some JFL learners, reading may play

a huge role in their learning, whereas technology may not play any role. Also, some JFL learners may not like the reading project at all.

Moreover, the data tools used in this study only elicited self-reporting. Therefore, even though the participants were trying to convey their experiences and opinions honestly, what they said could be biased. Additionally, the use of the think-aloud protocol has limitations. Think-aloud was used with an intention to collect online data from the participants. Since the participants may not reflect everything about their learning in the interview and diary, having access to their thoughts during actual learning is beneficial. However, think-aloud does not necessarily guarantee that I am actually accessing participants' full thoughts. Plus, the action of think-aloud itself may have changed participants' cognitive process (Loew & Morgan-Short, 2004). Additionally, the condition of being observed may change participants' thoughts.

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the analysis of the collected data using the two motivational theories (i.e., SDT and L2MSS) has a limitation. This study was more task-based, focusing on reading rather than language learning in general, while these two theories are meant for language learning in general. Thus, applying these two theories may not be valid without support from additional research.

Further, although motivational theories and metacognitive strategy use played a role in the analysis, they were not necessarily the focus of the present study. Hence, this study did not apply the tools that are often used to examine learners' motivation and learning strategies, such as surveys. If these tools had been used, a more detailed analysis in terms of motivation and strategy use would have been possible.

Moreover, although this research attempted to examine how simplified reading materials play a role in SDL settings, the reading project brought to the participants was externally created. Hence, despite the fact that the present study was designed for self-

directed learners, the participants' learning environment was not necessarily an SDL setting. The participants needed to write journal entries and send them to me, which might have affected how participants learned Japanese during the reading project.

Furthermore, the length of the reading project was four weeks. This might have been a little short for some participants such as Grace. She could not read anything for two weeks since her work schedule became very busy during the two weeks. If the reading project length had been longer, such as three or six months, then the data collected might have been very different from this study's data.

Additionally, as already mentioned, although I attempted to explain the reading project in the same way, the explanation to each participant as well as the participants' attention levels to it could have been different. As indicated in the discussion section, some participants did not care about extensive reading tips when they engaged in the reading project. If all participants paid attention to the reading project at the same level, the results might have been different. In other words, the results for each participant were potentially different not because of differences in preference among participants; instead, perhaps participants performed differently because they interpreted the instructions of the reading project differently.

Finally, the relationships between the participants and myself could have influenced the results of the study. Prior to recruitment for the present study, I personally knew each participant. Although I had been a teacher, a tutor, or a teaching assistant for all of the participants, factors such as when we met, in what ways, and differences in social status between myself and the participants could have affected how the participants were involved in this research. For instance, if the participant knew me as a tutor, then our relationship would be more relaxed than if they knew me as a teaching assistant in a college Japanese class. Similarly, if the participants were older than me, then they might

have behaved differently compared to younger participants, not necessarily because that was how they intrinsically were but rather because of the difference in social status between us. This is related to the insider-outsider issue described in Marriam et al.'s (2001) research. While there are both advantages and disadvantages to being an insider, outsider, or both, replication studies are necessary with researchers who can take different positions.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Although this research examined JFL learners in SDL settings, the results of this study are applicable to L2 learners in many other contexts, including classroom settings and with other less commonly taught languages. This study's most crucial finding with implications for teaching is participants' reflections about Japanese ER materials. Even though the participants in the present research had overall positive feelings towards the provided ER materials, they also had several concerns about the materials.

The first concern is the potential difficulty in finding what L2 learners are really interested in reading, particularly with Japanese ER materials. This concern is also mentioned in several studies within the Japanese ER literature, including Leung (2002), Hitotsugi and Day (2004), and Matsui, et al. (2012). Despite the fact that there were several available readings for L2 Japanese learners, none of the participants in this study read the textbook style readings. This indicates that JFL learners may not want to read texts that remind them of "classroom" or "formal education" books in their SDL or as their pleasure reading. Since not as many general graded readers for less commonly taught languages like Japanese are available as for more commonly taught languages like English, this non-preference for the textbook-style graded readers may pose challenges

for many L2 self-directed learners. Prior to this research, I looked for graded readers for Japanese. However, I could only find the two series of ER books published, which I used in this study. That means there are only several books available for each proficiency level, and just reading these books alone it is not likely that L2 learners will be able to advance to the next level. Even though these series of graded readers provided a variety of topics, some learners may not find anything interesting. Moreover, graded readers may have their own issue. Susser and Robb (1990) explained that graded readers are simplified, but that also means they may not be as good as the originals. By simplifying, graded readers may potentially make readings more difficult, since they have to omit seemingly unnecessary parts, which could be important for understanding of stories.

Additionally, for lower-level learners particularly, if they like to read children's books, then they may find some other authentic books to read. However, if they are not fans of children's books, they have a very restricted number of books available to them. This issue may be especially pertinent to the Japanese language due to kanji. Worthy (1996) suggested that for reluctant and struggling readers, repetition can hook them onto reading. However, although L2 readers can be reluctant and struggling, they are not necessary the same in their L1. In fact, many L2 learners already have high literacy when they start learning a foreign language; therefore, the same principle may not work for L2 learners. In this study, some participants explicitly mentioned that repetition can be boring.

The second concern is the books themselves. The participants in this research reflected about the books in terms of readability. One such reflection was related to the difficulty of books. For second semester JFL learners, even the first level graded readers can be too challenging due to the lack of illustrations. For this level of learners, although each page contained at least one illustration to help readers better understand the material,

readers may still have difficulties understanding the book well, which may result in a negative effect on motivation. In contrast, while authentic children's books may contain word variations that may confuse readers, illustrations help them understand better since there are fewer sentences per page.

Another reflection concerning the books themselves was the size of furigana, which is probably particular only to Japanese readings. For some learners, even though the size of the letters in graded readers is larger than the ones for adult native readers, the phonetic guide to kanji characters may be too small to read. This can bother readers and result in staying away from reading books. Moreover, participants' comments suggested that it may be helpful for learners to have the option to hide furigana for their learning. Most of these disadvantages of graded readers can be overcome with the use of technology. For example, readers can change the size of letters on web pages with a browser function. If there are more readings available on the Internet, or if teachers can develop their own graded readers and upload them to their homepage, then such readings may be more helpful and able to accommodate readers' preferences.

Furthermore, it is probably better to give considerations to the design of the books itself. From the interviews, it was obvious that the majority of the participants did not like textbook-looking reading materials. Some of the participants mentioned that they did not want to feel as though they were in the classroom. Hence, more fun-looking design of the books that do not make self-directed L2 learners feel as if they were reading for class may be important to attract more self-directed L2 learners.

Lastly, there was also a concern about length of reading materials. The majority of participants liked or disliked particular readings because of the length of these books. Because self-directed L2 learners may not have more than 10-15 minutes per learning session, it is important to make readings (or sections of reading materials) short enough,

so that they can finish the book or the section of the book within a single learning session. If they cannot finish the reading (or section), then they may feel discouraged about reading, as they may not gain a sense of accomplishment.

Thus, based on participants' reflections in this research, there are some concerns about using ER materials for JFL learners. These concerns are not necessarily only for self-directed JFL learners but also for L2 Japanese learners in classroom settings or learners of other less commonly taught languages. Teachers may use ER materials for classroom assignments or suggest them for motivated students. However, as what learners are able to read can be limited, especially at beginning levels, the teacher's role is important. In order to support learners' willingness to read more, teachers should check out what is available as potential Japanese resources. Moreover, teachers are encouraged to support learners to find their favorite reading materials themselves.

FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

The present study examined how English-speaking JFL learners approach SDL and ER materials. Since this area of study is still underdeveloped, more research on self-directed L2 learners is encouraged. Hence, replication studies are suggested for future research. For example, future studies can examine participants' longer commitment to ER materials (e.g., six months, a year or more) as well as follow-up with participants after the reading project to investigate if participating in the reading project changed their approach to self-study of a language. A new study can also utilize a wider range of tools for data collection, such as surveys to articulate more insights into participants' motivational orientations toward reading as well as language learning in general. Researchers are also encouraged to examine other less commonly taught languages (e.g.,

Chinese, Russian, etc.) as well as more commonly taught languages (e.g., English) to compare how participants engage in self-directed learning similarly or differently. Additionally, examining a larger number of participants is important to increase the generalizability of the study.

Moreover, it is also possible to examine other aspects of L2 learners' reading experiences and practices. This study, for instance, examined the affective factors and the approaches of JFL learners. Future research may focus on other aspects of self-directed learners' ER, including learning gains; their process of searching for potential, appropriate, or favorite reading materials; and other types of strategy uses. Further, reading materials themselves can be the focus of research. Future research may investigate what type of readings are more accepted by a wider population of L2 learners and whether or not there is any difference between readings for less commonly taught languages and more commonly taught languages.

FINAL CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the end, I would like to re-emphasize the importance of SDL and ER in language learning. This dissertation research articulated the current SDL situations of the Japanese language through the case-study method. Based on this research, language instructors, particularly the ones for less commonly taught languages, are encouraged to help their students as much as possible by locating possible reading resources and training them how to search materials. This is especially crucial when their students display interests in ER or just additional reading outside of class. Additionally, this study would also encourage the publishers for less commonly taught languages to develop more ER materials for L2 learners. Hopefully, these findings also provide some guidance to L2

learners, whether or not they are currently learning on their own, as well as instructors and publishers to improve the learning experience of L2 learners.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Age * ( )

2. Gender *
   Male Female

3. Highest level of education *
Select the last institution you attended (or the institution you are currently attending)
   High school
   College
   Graduate school (Master's)
   Graduate school (Ph.D.)
   Other ( )

4. Native language *
If you are bilingual, write the language that you speak more fluently first.
   ( )

5. Hobby
   ( )

6. How long have you been studying Japanese?
   ( )

7. What is your current proficiency level in Japanese?
   Beginner
   Upper-beginner
   Low-intermediate
   Intermediate
   High-intermediate
   Advanced
   I don't know

8. What devices do you use in your daily life to access information?

Computer (PC or Mac) Tablet (e.g., iPad) Smartphone (e.g., iPhone)
Cell phone (non-smartphones) Portable player (e.g., iPod)
E-books (e.g., Kindle, Nook) DVD Radio
Game console (e.g., PS, Wii, Nintendo 3DS)
Other ( )

9. How long do you use the Internet on a given day?

Less than an hour
1-2 hours
2-3 hours
More than 3 hours

10. Do you enjoy reading? *

"Reading" includes novels, comic strips, graphic novels, web news, newspaper, etc., but does not include functional reading, such as reading the instruction of a math problem.

Reading is one of my favorite activities
I like reading
Somewhat
Not really
I don't like reading at all

* indicates required fields.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview 1

1. Please tell me about your decision to learn Japanese. Why did you decide to start learning Japanese?
    a. How long have you been studying Japanese?
    b. What do you think your current proficiency level is?
    c. How often do you study each week? For how long?
    d. (If taking an organized class) How often do you have class each week?
    e. Why did you decide to teach yourself Japanese?

2. Please tell me more about your goals in learning Japanese. What do you do in order to achieve your goals?
    a. What are your plans to continue your study in order to achieve these goals?
    b. How are you trying to achieve your goals? (Roles of technology and reading)?
    c. What are the challenges you face in reaching your goals?

3. What do you do when you feel unmotivated or encounter conflicts, difficulties, etc. in your learning? How do you motivate yourself?

4. Please tell me more about your learning experience with other languages. Have you learned other foreign languages? If yes, how were those the experiences different from learning Japanese?
    a. Reading?
    b. Technology?
    c. Learner autonomy?

5. Please tell me more about the skills that you want to work on in Japanese. Which skill do you most/least want to improve? Why is that?

6. Please tell me about your way to approach to learning. How do you study Japanese? Is it different from when you learned other languages?

7. Do you do anything to keep track of your learning progress? Do you think you are

managing your learning well? Why do you think so?

a. What are the roles of technology and reading in managing your learning?
b. Do you feel confident in the management of your learning?
c. Are there any challenges in managing their learning?

8 In your opinion, what are the learner's responsibilities in learning Japanese? Are they different when learning other languages?

9. Please show me the materials that you are currently using to learn Japanese. Could you explain briefly how you use these materials when you study?

10. Please tell me about reading in general. Do you like to read in English?

a. Favorite genre to read?
b. Frequency (How often do you read each week?)
c. Paper-based vs. electronic (how much do you read in each medium?)
d. How much is reading important to you?

11. Now, please tell me about reading in Japanese. Do you read in Japanese? How important to you is being able to read proficiently in Japanese?

a. If yes, what texts have you read in Japanese?
b. How did you find these readings? Did you like them?
c. Have you tried authentic reading materials? How did you like them?
d. If no, why not?

12. In your opinion, what aspects of reading in Japanese are challenging to you?

a. How do you plan to overcome these challenges?

13. Please tell me about Japanese reading materials. Do you feel that you have enough Japanese reading materials available to you?

a. Do you feel that you have enough readings available to your level?
b. If available, would you want to read some Japanese texts in plain or simplified Japanese?

14. Please tell me about your technology use in general.
    a. Devices (What devices do you use?)
    b. Internet usage (How much time do you spend on the Internet each day?)
    c. What do you look on the Internet?
    d. Apps (Do you use apps? What apps do you use most frequently?)
    e. New tech (Do you like to try out new technology? How well can you use them?)

15. Please tell me about your technology use in learning Japanese. Do you use technology in your study of Japanese?
    a. What do you use?
    b. How do you like the technology you use? Do you see any improvement in your Japanese from the use of these technologies?
    c. If no, why not?

16. How much is technology important in your study of Japanese?

17. If there are any remaining questions, the researcher asks them here.

Interview 2

1. Please tell me about the readings I provided you four weeks ago. Did you read them?

2. Please tell me which readings you have read.
    a. Materials and topics read most?
    b. Selection process (How did you select what you read?)?
    c. Mode of readings (books or electronic reading)?
    d. General reflection about the readings (both content and reception of the readings)?
    e. General reflection about the graded readers?
    f. Whether or not the readings would support their learning
    g. Other readings read (tried to find? liked?)?
    h. Change in participant's perception towards reading?

3. Please tell me about the technology you used during the past four weeks.
    a. Whether or not you read the electronic reading from the researcher?
    b. Whether or not you explored more resources on the Internet?
    c. Change in how you use technology to learn Japanese?

4. Please tell me about your approach to reading and technology and about your perceptions over the past four weeks.
    a. Change in how you study?
    b. Change in perceptions of self-directed learning?
    c. Influence of writing journal entries?

APPENDIX C: JOURNAL INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions for Diary Entries

During the four weeks that you are engaged in using reading materials, please write brief journal entries in English after each session of self-directed study of Japanese. For example, if you study Japanese on Wednesday evening and Friday evening during a given week, please write a journal entry after each evening study session, or two entries for that week. Please do not limit your entries only to the reading materials that you have received from the researcher.

For each journal entry, please include:

1. Date and time
2. The length of the study session
3. What you did during the study session (e.g., went through a vocabulary list, solved problems in the textbook, read a Japanese text, surfed Japanese webpages, etc.)
4. How you felt about your learning in this session, and why you think so. Be as specific as possible

Please see the further example below (next page).

If you did not study at all during a given week, please write a short journal entry and include:

1. Date
2. Why you did not or could not study Japanese that week
3. How do you feel about not studying Japanese that week

Once you are done with a journal entry, please send it to the researcher at [researcher's email]. The researcher will also remind you to send journal entries once a week.

Remember that reflecting on your own learning actually benefits your language learning! By writing journal entries, you are actually self-monitoring and assessing your own progress, which is important for successful language acquisition. So please try to write in your journal as much and as often as you can!

Detailed Example:

7/25/2015
Studied from 8:30-9:15 p.m.

I have been busy lately with my school work, so I did not have time as much as I wished this week. But today, finally, I have some time to work on Japanese. As I wrote in the last journal, I have been using this new website called Mango from last month and I used it for today's study as well. I am using this in hoping for some pronunciation practices, but they really provide me with good lessons. This website uses several different native speakers to record all the dialogues, words, and example sentences, so I can listen to various different speaking styles and tones, which I think is a good listening practice! Particularly, I just found that one of the guys seems to speak in weird tones; I bet he is not native to Tokyo. By the time I go to Japan next year, I will definitely polish my pronunciations and want to make the local people surprised!

APPENDIX D: READING BOOK LIST

Level	Title	Type of readings
0	アリとキリギリス The Ant and the Grasshopper	Graded
0	いなかのねずみとまちのねずみ The town mouse and the country mouse	Graded
0	やくしま Yakushima Island	Graded
0	桜 Cherry Blossom	Graded
0	大豆 Soy Beans	Graded
0	木村家の毎日「いってきます」 The Kimura's Everyday Life "I'm Going."	Graded
0	木村家の毎日「いただきます」 The Kimura's Everyday Life "Thank You for the Food."	Graded
0	木村家の毎日「一郎、学校で」 The Kimura's Everyday Life "Ichiroo at His School"	Graded
0	西町交番の良さん「交番はどこ？」 Mr. Ryoo at Nishimachi Police Box "Where is a Police Box?"	Graded
0	りんごです I am an Apple	Authentic
0	くだもの Fruits	Authentic
0	やさいのおなか The Bellies of Vegetables	Authentic
0	てのひらおんどけい The Palm Thermometer	Authentic

1	ふね Ship	Graded
1	さんびきのこぶた The Three Little Pigs	Graded
1	どうしてこうもりはひるとばない？ Why Do Bats Not Fly during Daytime?	Graded
1	どうしてうみのみずはしおからい？ Why Is the Sea Water Salty?	Graded
1	まねきねこ Beckoning Cat	Graded
1	女の子 A Little Girl	Graded
1	ハチの話 The Story of Hachi	Graded
1	ジョンさん日本へ Mr. John, Going to Japan	Graded
1	浦島太郎 Urashima Taroo	Graded
1	笑い話 Funny Stories	Graded
1	おにぎり Rice Balls	Authentic
1	きょうのごはん Today’s Dinner	Authentic
1	たべたのだあれ Who ate it?	Authentic
2	さるとかに The Monkey and the Crab	Graded

2	はだかのおうさま The Emperor's New Clothes	Graded
2	あかずきんちゃん Little Red Riding Hood	Graded
2	かちかちやま Mt. Kachi Kachi	Graded
2	ふたつのパン The Two Breads	Graded
2	あくまのさんぽ Devil's Walking	Graded
2	ジャックとまめのき Jack and the Beanstalk	Graded
2	シンデレラ Cinderella	Graded
2	はなさかじいさん The Story of the Old Man Who Made Withered Trees to Blossom	Graded
2	ふたりのこいびと、ほか The Two Lovers, etc.	Graded
2	ヘンゼルとグレーテル Hansel and Gretel	Graded
2	ろうじんのまち The Old Man's Town	Graded
2	へっこきひめ The Farting Princess	Graded
2	絵姿奥さん Beautiful Wife	Graded
2	桃太郎 Peach Boy	Graded

2	クリスマスプレゼント Christmas Gift	Graded
2	象のトンキー Tonky, the Elephant	Graded
2	一休さん Ikkyuu	Graded
2	パンやのくまさん The Bear at the Bakery	Authentic
2	このすしなあに What is This Sushi?	Authentic
2	だってだってのおばあさん The Gramma Who Makes Excuses	Authentic
2	ぼくのかえりみち On My Way Home	Authentic
3	よだかのほし The Nighthawk Star	Graded
3	きんこやぶり Safecracker	Graded
3	なしとりきょうだい Pear-picking Brothers	Graded
3	ばかオンダル Silly Ondal	Graded
3	にほんのしんわ２ Japanese Mythology 2	Graded
3	ひとふさのぶどう A Bunch of Grapes	Graded
3	おおおとこのはなし A Story of a Big Man	Graded

3	てんぐのはな The Nose of Tengu	Graded
3	ごへいとつなみ Gohee and the Tsunami	Graded
3	むじな、幽霊滝 The Badger, The Ghost Fall	Graded
3	注文の多い料理店 The Restaurant of Many Orders	Graded
3	かぐや姫 Princess Kaguya	Graded
3	この人だあれ？ Who Is This Person?	Graded
3	蜘蛛の糸、鼻 Spider's Thread, Nose	Graded
3	きょうはなんのひ？ What Day Is Today?	Authentic
3	ぶたぶたくんのおかいもの Mr. Pig's Shopping	Authentic
3	となりのトトロ My Neighbor Totoro	Authentic
3	千と千尋の神隠し Spirited Away	Authentic
3+	はれときどきぶた Sunny Partly Pig	Authentic
4	きょうと Kyoto	Graded
4	ひろしま、みやじま Miyajima, Hiroshima	Graded

4	中国のかなしい恋物語 Chinese Sad Love Stories	Graded
4	奈良の大仏 The Great Buddha of Nara	Graded
4	クリスマスキャロル Christmas Carol	Graded
4	赤毛クラブ The Red-Headed League	Graded
4	信長、秀吉、家康 Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, Ieyasu	Graded
4	おちくぼ物語 The Tale of Ochikubo	Graded
4	女王卑弥呼 Queen Himiko	Graded
4	羅生門、トロッコ Rashomon, Trocco	Graded
4	雪女 Snow Lady	Graded
4	永井隆 Takashi Nagai	Graded
4	杜子春 Da Zi Chun	Graded
4	走れメロス Run Melos!	Graded
4	野菊の墓 Tomb of Wild Chrysanthemum	Graded
4	セロ弾きのゴーシュ Goche, The Cello Player	Authentic

4	あたしンち vol.1 My House vol. 1	Authentic
4	クレヨンしんちゃん vol.1 Crayon Shin-chan vol. 1	Authentic
4+	ダーリンは外国人 Bilingual Edition My Darling Is a Foreigner Bilingual Edition	Authentic
4+	日本人の知らない日本語 vol.1 The Japanese Japanese People Don't Know 1	Authentic
5	坂本龍馬 Ryoma Sakamoto	Graded
5	野口英世 Hideyo Noguchi	Graded
5	時をかける少女アニメ版 The Time Travelling Girl Anime Version	Authentic
5	もものかんづめ The Peach Can	Authentic
5	決断　いのちの一滴 Manga Project X: Decision, One Drop of Life	Authentic
0-3	たのしいよみもの５５ Fun Readings 55	Textbook
1-3	日本文化を読む　初級 Reading Japanese Culture Elementary Level	Textbook
4-5	日本文化を読む　上級 Reading Japanese Culture Advanced Level	Textbook

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE GRADED READING MATERIALS

Paper-Based Graded Reader (Level 1)

七年前の夏、良太は海へ行きました。
そこで、絵を描きました。
京子は友だちと海へ来ました。
そして、良太の絵を見ました。
「いい絵ですね。とても、きれいですね」
良太は京子を見ました。
――かわいい人！ ――
それから良太は毎日、京子に電話をします。

二人は映画を見ます。レストランで、ご飯を食べます。お酒も飲みます。とても楽しいです。
ある日、二人は京子のお父さんに言いました。
「私たち、結婚したいです」
京子のお父さんは言いました。
「だめです。京子はまだ大学生です。あなたもまだ若い。だれも、あなたの絵を買いません。お金もありませんね」

Web-Based Graded Reader (A Sample Article from August 9, 2016)

NEWS WEB EASY　やさしい日本語のニュースです。

NEWSWEB EASYについて

じゅうどう　おおのせんしゅ　きん
オリンピックの柔 道で大野選 手が金メダル

[08月09日 16時30分]

普通のニュースを読む

ニュースを聞く　0:00/1:06　ことばの色をつける

リオデジャネイロのオリンピックで、柔 道 男子７３キロ級の大野 将 平 選 手が金メダルを取りました。大野選 手は決 勝でアゼルバイジャンのオルジョフ選 手と戦って、「一 本」を取って勝ちました。

２０１２年のオリンピックでは、男子の柔 道は金メダルを取ることができませんでした。

大野選 手は２４歳で、世界選 手 権で２回 優 勝しています。大野選 手は高い技 術があって、力でも外 国の選 手に負けません。

大野選 手は「大きなプレッシャーがありましたが、試合 中は思ったより落ち着くことができました」と話していました。

たいそう　にっぽん　だんし　　ながさき　げんばく　お　　ねん

新しいニュース

- カヌーのスラローム　羽根田 卓也選 手が銅メダルを取る
- ラグビーの男子　強いニュージーランドに日 本が勝つ
- 車から遺体が見つかる　行方不明の大 学 生の可能性
- 尖 閣 諸 島の近くの海に来る中 国の船が増えている
- 狭い場所で急に降る強い雨を予測できるようにしたい
- オリンピックの体 操　日 本が男子の団 体で金メダル
- オリンピックの柔 道で大野選 手が金メダル

このページの先頭へ

1か月のニュース

次の日　8月9日（火）　前の日

- オリンピックの体 操　日 本が男子の団 体で金メダル
- オリンピックの柔 道で大野選 手が金メダル
- 長 崎に原 爆が落とされてから７１年　平和を祈る式
- ロシアの選 手はパラリンピックに出ることができない
- 暑い日が続く　ホッキョクグマに氷のプレゼント

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